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REMARKS

ON THE

CONDUCT OF OPPOSITION.

TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

REMARKS

ON

THE CONDUCT

OF

OPPOSITION

DURING

THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT,

BY

GEOFFREY MOWBRAY, ESQ.

Καινη δι ω ανδρες Αθηναιοι ἑτεροι γι λόγοι παῤῥεριπκασι προς υμας, ψυδεις και πολλὰ την πολιτειαν ελαπτοντες· οιον ει τοις δικαστηριοις υμιν εστι η σωτηρια, και δει τη ψηφω την πολιτειαν υμας Φυλαττειν. Ἐγω δι οιδα, οτι ταυτα μεν υμιν, τα δικαστηρια των πρὸς αλληλους δικαιων εστι κοινα. Ἐν δε τοις οπλοις δει κρατειν των εχθρων, και δια τουτων εστιν η σωτηρια της πολιτειας.

But, O my fellow-citizens, a new and different language hath poured in upon you; *falſe, and highly dangerous to the community.* Such is that aſſertion, that in your tribunals is your great ſecurity; *that your right of ſuffrage is the real bulwark of the conſtitution.* That theſe tribunals are our common reſource, in all private conteſts, I acknowledge. *But it is by arms we are to ſubdue our enemies, by arms we are to defend the ſtate.*

Demoſth. Orat. de Repub. Ordinan.

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1798.

BRITISH MUSEUM

REMARKS,

&c.

My dear Friend,

AMONG the remarkable events of this productive period, few are more ſingular than the retreat of the New Whigs from their ſtation in Parliament.

The reaſons aſſigned for this ſeceſſion are, at leaſt, original. They do not conſole us with hopes, that the veſſel of the ſtate is left to perſue her courſe under more able guidance. They do not urge paſt labours in exemption of future fatigue; they do not entreat a condonation of their ſervices in mercy to a frail conſtitution, worn down, paſt cure, by the anxious diſcharge of public duties. Their juſtification

is far, very far different. They are eager to proclaim and magnify our perilous ſituation. They paint with all the ſtrong colours of rhetoric, thoſe miſeries in which their country is ſhrouded and envelloped. Defeat and diſgrace abroad—corruption and diſcontent at home—an abandoned miniſtry—an inefficient legiſlature—Ireland forced into acts of Rebellion by a tyrannous government—Great Britain bankrupt in reſources, undone with taxes, yet ſupinely tolerative of a cabinet, in whoſe hands neither victory nor ſupplication can procure the bleſſings of peace.

Such is the matter of that melancholy dirge, which oppoſition ſung as it calmly arrayed the ceremonies of its own diſſolution. Having chanted theſe funereal notes, it voluntarily lies down to die, in hopes, that Phœnix-like, a new and more glorious bird will ſpread his purple wings to the ſun, as he riſes from the aſhes of the ſelf-devoted parent.

This event was announced to the country during the laſt ſeſſion, while a motion for a Reform in Parliament was under debate. They declared that our repreſentative ſyſtem is effete, rotten, and inadequate to the functions of a free government; that the ſentiments of the country have no weight in the Commons Houſe of Parliament;

Parliament; all conſtitutional controul is ſunk, and ſwallowed up in miniſterial influence. The meaſures of a profligate adminiſtration are voted in a mood of raſh and unmerited confidence, while the ſalutary counſels of upright ſtateſmen are rejected with diſdain.

I know, my dear Sir, that you will agree with me, that this is a falſe, and wicked account of our internal government: you have already ſaid that it is an uncommon ſtep taken by the party at a very uncommon period.

The tyrants of France have refuſed us peace. Envious of our proſperity they have planned an invaſion of the empire. They have proclaimed it as their fixed deſign to overturn our conſtitution, to wreſt from us the dominion of the ſeas, to annihilate our commerce, to riot in the plunder of a peaceful country, and an induſtrious people. Republican armies already look to a diviſion of our ſpoils. Their republican rulers already count upon the triumphs of conqueſt, and audaciouſly hypothecate our wealth in payment of thoſe loans which they make to ſubdue us.

Theſe are the genuine ſources of our preſent danger. It is the boundleſs ambition and animoſity of France, the general and infatuated blindneſs of

Europe, and the reſtleſs ſpirit of a republican faction among us, which render our ſituation truly critical. But even if we could add to theſe calamities the much greater misfortune of a corrupt and inefficient government at home, upon what principle is it that the accumulated wretchedneſs of the country is to juſtify the New Whigs in ſeceding from their parliamentary duties? It may be venial to indulge in the mild and ſtable pleaſures of ſecluded life, during a ſeaſon of public tranquility. But when the ſafety of the commonwealth is placed in doubt and hazard, a patriot ſtateſman is left without alternative or choice. He is ſummoned by an imperious duty to the awful, but grateful taſk of adminiſtering relief to her wants, of appeaſing her troubles, and healing her wounds. The heart of an honeſt man grapples to his country with a tenacity proportioned to her danger. He has no time, no affections, no paſſions, no powers of body, no energies of mind, which he does not conſecrate to her defence and reſcue. He cannot, like the new Whigs, retire to ſleep in peace, lulled by the ſtorm which burſts upon his country, and deſolates Europe. He is not betrayed into indolence by hopes, but he is utterly incapable of deſpair. Diſcomfited, diſgraced, baffled, diſappointed, ejected from the very boſom of his country, ſtill the divine impulſe will not ſuffer him to reſt. His reſources, his plans, his exertions, his enterprizes

are

are inexhauſtible, and his labours find no other period than the termination of his life.

But that love of our country, which, according to ancient ethics, comprehended all the virtues and endearments of humanity, is unfelt by the New Whigs. They retire from Parliament, during a period of national diſtreſs, and aſſign reaſons for their conduct, of the moſt pernicious tendency. Their apology (if it will ſubmit to ſuch an humble name) is a direct and open declaration to the country, that we are without an effective and lawful government, at this perilous juncture. It is nothing leſs than a public exhortation to the people to reaſſume the reins of government. If the ſtate of our repreſentation juſtifies thoſe who are choſen into Parliament, in deſerting their ſtation, the electors of Great Britain ought not to make any return. The conſtituents cannot authoriſe acts, which the repreſentative cannot in conſcience perform. The "impoſture" ought not to continue, and the whole body of the people ſhould riſe up as one maſs, and wreſt the powers of the third eſtate from thoſe who have uſurped its functions*.

* This is the very language of a ſpeech made in the Whig Club, 5th December, 1797, as given in the Morning Chronicle. It is there ſaid, that to attend Parliament, is "to hold out falſe hopes to the country; that it is abetting impoſture, and only approving things

Language and conduct like this is always pregnant with anarchy and ruin. But the danger is more imminent, becauſe the New Whigs plough in the ſame furrow, and deepen the very line of diſtinction, which France now draws between the government and people of theſe kingdoms, for the utter deſtruction of both. Nothing can purge a party acting thus, from the charge of raſh and injurious violence. The ſeceſſion deſerves a much worſe appellation, unleſs the motives which gave riſe to it are unqueſtionably pure, and the reaſons upon which it is founded are, to appearance at leaſt, convincing and ſolid.

Let us examine both.

Our repreſentative ſyſtem has undergone but little change ſince the revolution. Every partial alteration which has taken place in particular boroughs, has contributed to extend the privilege of voting more widely. For the laſt twenty years, the preſent leader of the New Whigs has been at the head of a party in ſyſtematic oppoſition to each ſucceeding cabinet. No one adminiſtration, no one parliament, no one meaſure, has

things radically wrong." It is farther declared, that the orator is "ready to act as ſoon as the people are unwilling to ſuffer this deluſion." This is not the ſpeech of a wild democratic baronet, but of the head of the party.

eſcaped

eſcaped his unqualified cenſure. He unceaſingly denounced the influence of the crown, the weakneſs of miniſters, and the corrupt ſervility of parliament. Thoſe who read his invectives againſt Lord North and his majorities, and compare them with his more recent ſpeeches, may find ſome change in his political ſentiments, but they will meet with none in the warmth of his perſonal philippics. The counſels of Mr. Fox, and of a much larger oppoſition than the preſent, were rejected as uniformly in thoſe times *, as during the laſt ſeſſion. Yet neither Mr. Fox, nor any other member, retired then from his duty, becauſe he could not effect a reform in parliament. So far as any thing can be inferred from the conduct of Mr. Fox, during that period, it was more in praiſe than in condemnation of our repreſentative ſyſtem as it now ſtands. He admitted its imperfections, by ſupporting the general principle of reform; but he gave it a moſt effectual ſupport, by diſapproving of every ſpecific plan propoſed to ſuperſede it. It is utterly impoſſible, then, that he could have conſidered our repreſentation as inadequate to the ends of government, during the beſt and moſt vigorous period of his political life, ſince he could neither deviſe nor ſelect a ſyſtem to adopt in its place.

* Theſe remarks are, of courſe, confined to the period of Mr. Fox's being in oppoſition.

To what recent event, therefore, are we to attribute it, that while the ſhape and form of our repreſentation remains unchanged, Mr. Fox has changed his opinions? It would be injuſtice to that gentleman to ſuppoſe, that he had formed his preſent reſolution at the cloſe of the laſt Parliament, much as he declaimed againſt its wicked acts, and unconſtitutional opinions. If he had done ſo, he was bound to have diſcloſed to his conſtituents the unuſual terms upon which he meant to accept of his ſeat. It was the manifeſt duty of every one of the New Whigs to have done the ſame *. If they had determined to ſecede prior to the general election, they have deceived the electors by whom they were returned. If they have embraced the reſolution ſince that

* It would be difficult to juſtify them now for not reſigning their ſeats, ſince they have ſtubbornly reſolved to neglect their duty. It ſeems, however, that they conſtrue the ſilence of their conſtituents into an approbation of their conduct. I queſtion the right of the electors to give this leave upon any conſtitutional principle. But if we admit thus much to oppoſition, they muſt, in return, admit, that the general ſilence of the country gives a like ſanction to the uſual meaſures of Government. The ſituation of Mr. Fox is ſtill more awkward and whimſical than that of his coadjutors. He ſays, that his conſtituents deſired his attendance to oppoſe the aſſeſſed taxes. Since they command him to oppoſe a meaſure which they diſapprove, it may be fairly urged, that when they acquieſce in his abſence, they condemn his oppoſition. Into ſuch abſurdities will men of the greateſt talents fall, when they deviate from the plain onward track of life.

time,

time, they have done ſo at a moſt ſuſpicious ſeaſon. The parliamentary meaſures of the laſt ſeſſion were much fewer in number and leſs important in their nature, than thoſe of the foregoing. But, during the ſpring, a few panic-ſtruck, and ſome diſappointed gentlemen wiſhed to place a reſpectable nobleman at the head of a new adminiſtration. The ſtipulated baſis of this arrangement was, the excluſion of Mr. Fox from power; and Mr. Sheridan was too wiſe to deſert him, for the cold hope of employment under a miniſtry much too feeble to laſt *. The ſcheme was ſilly; but though a mere bubble, ſhort-lived and empty, it ſhewed, as it played upon the ſurface, how ſtrong the current of opinion ran againſt the New Whigs.

Since the above was written, a letter has appeared in the public prints, giving an account of this tranſaction, and ſigned with the name of the noble Earl alluded to. The narrative ſhews that coquetry is not confined to the lovelier ſex. It is impoſſible not to ſmile at

——"The conſcience of his worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unſought be won;
Not obvious, not obtruſive, but retir'd."

The animadverſions upon the Duke of Portland's conduct, and the panegyric upon Mr. Fox, might call for ſome remark; but I would not unneceſſarily offend the feelings of a gallant ſoldier, and a moſt liberal and accompliſhed gentleman. The letter from Mr. Fox, which is ſubjoined, is a model for thoſe to copy, who would ſeem to anſwer, and yet wiſh to ſay nothing.

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Was it the cackling of theſe few poor geeſe which alarmed our politicians for the faſety of their country, as it deſtroyed their deluſive dreams of place and emolument? Certain it is, that the plan of reform was introduced ſoon after this change was propoſed, and the reſolution was then taken to ſecede from Parliament if it failed of ſucceſs.

But let the motives of the ſeceſſion be what they may, a defect in the cauſe of repreſentation could form no ground to juſtify it. The very circumſtance upon which the oppoſition urged the neceſſity of the meaſure, fails them in point of fact. It is not true that the preſent Houſe of Commons do not ſpeak the ſentiments of the Country—I ſay this with the means of proof at hand—There never was a time in which the conduct of the legiſlature was more fully and heartily approved by the great body of the people. I will not reſort to that ſilence which the oppoſition interpret into an unequivocal approbation from their immediate conſtituents. They have given us a more deciſive teſt of the popularity of Parliament in their eagerneſs to obtain addreſſes for the removal of his Majeſty's Miniſters. In moſt counties they did not venture to call a meeting of the people, as being well aſſured that the meaſure would be negatived. In many where they

they did hazard the attempt, they were outnumbered and obliged to retire.

Let us ſuppoſe, however, that the ſentiments of the people are at variance with thoſe of their repreſentatives, and that nothing can reſtore their ſalutary influence upon the meaſures of government but a reform in Parliament. Still I ſhould contend upon Mr. Fox's own conceſſions in the debate upon that meaſure, that Mr. Gray's plan was utterly unfit to remove the miſchief which it propoſed to remedy. Its leading principle was to reduce the ſeveral modes of repreſentation which exiſt under the preſent conſtitution, to one nearly ſimilar to that which obtains in counties at preſent. Now, it was declared by Mr. Fox, that the body of the people are averſe from the war; but the ſame gentleman admitted, that this inclination for peace had made no change in the members returned by the different counties to Parliament at the laſt election *. If, then, the great body of country gentlemen who are choſen upon a ſimilar plan to that which is propoſed by Mr. Gray, adhere to the miniſtry in contradiction to the people's wiſhes, from whence is it collected, that an extenſion of the

* The ſtate of repreſentation in Weſtminſter, Norwich, Briſtol, &c. bears a more near reſemblance to the reform propoſed. But Mr. Fox's remark applies as directly to them as to the Counties.

very

very ſame mode of election, would give a different tone to the opinions and meaſures of the Houſe.

Neither will I aſk you, my dear Sir, to ſet bounds to your conceſſions here. Let us aſſume for a moment that this ſcheme would affect all that it purpoſes to accompliſh. Let us grant that it contains every poſſible bleſſing which an upright and able ſtateſman can deviſe for the empire. Still the Houſe of Commons reject it. Is a Member of Parliament to neglect the intereſts of his country altogether, becauſe he cannot pay her every poſſible ſervice? It is the boaſt of Mr. Fox, that he oppoſed our war with the Colonies, and that his labours were finally crowned with ſucceſs. Whether the part which he took in that unhappy buſineſs furniſhes an honeſt ſource for exultation, is a queſtion which hiſtory muſt ſolve. But if the oppoſition of Mr. Fox was of ſuch ſervice in the war with America, why ſhould he refuſe it in the conteſt with France?

The praiſe of rectifying the Miniſters financial miſtakes is claimed by Mr. Sheridan. If he has done this, the glory devolved on him, but the advantage redounded to his country. It may ſeem a poor and vulgar bleſſing in contraſt with the imperial gift of a regenerate conſtitution. But

ſtill it is a bleſſing, and upon what principle are we called upon to make a lumping bargain, and told that if one is above our price, we ſhall not be permitted to acquire the other? If the miſtakes of adminiſtration were to fall on miniſters alone, they might be left to reap the fruits of their own folly. But the errors of government are misfortunes to the people. It is the duty of our conſtitutional guardians utterly to avert, where they can, all meaſures injurious to our proſperity: but an unſucceſsful ſtruggle to do ſo, does not diſpenſe with what is not leſs their duty; to correct and ſoften thoſe miſchiefs which they find it impoſſible to remove altogether. They are retainers of the people, plegded and ſworn to watch over their intereſts both day and night. While they continue upon the honourable poſt, nothing can exempt them from the fatigues of duty. When they are once choſen into the Commons Houſe of Parliament, they are repreſentatives, not of a particular diſtrict, but of the whole Britiſh people; and it is beyond the power of a borough, or county, to diſpenſe with ſervice that is due to the nation at large *.

* It is obvious that if ſuch a power does exiſt, it is bottomed on the principle, that Members of Parliament are bound to obey their Conſtituents. Yet Mr. Fox, in the very ſpeech in which he declared his intention to ſecede, controverts that opinion. His words are—"It has often been a queſtion both within and without theſe walls, how far repreſentatives ought to be bound by "the inſtructions of their conſtituents. It is a queſtion upon which

"my

If the imperfection of the Houſe of Commons could form an excuſe for the abſence of its members, ſtill what are we to do with thoſe noblemen who deſert their duty in the Houſe of Peers? We have not heard, at leaſt, hitherto, that ſome inſane, or ſchool-boy lord, has deviſed a reform in that auguſt aſſembly. It is not yet propoſed to purify the Houſe by decimation, or to tear from the crown its prerogative of calling individuals of merit, and of fortune, up to its hereditary council. Flimſy, and patched up, as this vindication is, it leaves the oppoſition Peers to ſtand ſhivering before their country, bare, naked, and deſtitute of all apology. If they can be of any uſe to their country, it is not the conſtitution of the Houſe in which they ought to ſerve it that can prevent them. The reaſons of their conduct, (if they have any,) are at leaſt diſtinct from, if not contradictory to thoſe alledged in the Houſe of Commons. Decency forbids me to conjecture, that they have with the zeal of new converts, outſtripped their aſſociates, and as the New Whig Commoners, by their ſeceſſion, pronounce the Houſe of Commons to be an uſeleſs incumbrance in its preſent ſtate, ſo the New Whig Peers by a ſimilar ſtep, ſignify their opinion that

" my mind is not altogether made up, although I own I lean to the " opinion that having to legiſlate for the empire, they ought not to " be altogether guided by inſtructions that may be dictated by local " intereſts." Woodfall's Parl. Rep. of laſt Seſſion, Vol. III. p. 329.

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the Houſe of Lords is a ſenſeleſs inſtitution, which nothing can render productive of advantage to the country.

Such, my dear Sir, is the famous juſtification of this extraordinary proceeding. Its abſurdities are eaſily ſum'd up. It inſiſts upon applying a remedy to an evil which does not exiſt. The remedy it ſuggeſts would be too feeble to remove the malady if it was really felt. If the aſſertions of the New Whigs were allowed as facts, they would form no juſtification for their conduct, and if their juſtification were valid, it would extend only to half their party.

If the New Whigs had been ſincere in their eſcape from public buſineſs, it would be uſeleſs to expoſe the weakneſs and incongruity of their reaſons. I ſhould ſcorn to hunt puſillanimity down to its obſcure retreat. Condemning the profeſſed motives of their ſeceſſion, the public would applaud its effects, and admire the inſcrutable ways of Providence, which works good to its creatures from mean and fooliſh inſtruments. The people left to their own virtuous impulſe, would ceaſe to be the victims of deluſive hopes and injurious ſuſpicions. They would prepare to meet their ancient and implacable enemy with their ancient unanimity and courage. They would deem no ſacrifice of wealth, of comfort,

or

or of labour, too great in ſupport of thoſe honourable objects of living, which are infinitely more precious than life itſelf. Theſe cheering conſequences would reſult to the people without doors from the ſeceſſion of the party, if it were really to take place. They have given it as their own opinion, that their attendance in parliament is of no ſervice to the country.

But you, my dear Sir, are well aware that the New Whigs entertain deſigns far different from what they profeſs. The leaders of oppoſition are reſtleſs and turbulent ſpirits, equally impatient of obſcurity and repoſe. Pinioned down in the Earth's centre, they would ſtruggle to regain the political ſtation they had left, though ſin, and death, and all the plagues of hell, ſhould follow at their heels. They talk of flight while they plant an ambuſcade. They will not appear in the conſtitutional councils of the country to ſuperintend the general buſineſs of the ſtate. But if a particular meaſure is diſreliſhed by the people, however conducive to the real intereſts of the ſtate, they are eager to graſp at injurious popularity, by coming down to oppoſe it *.

* I cannot forbear quoting the opinion of one, who, was if poſſible, more of a patriot and ſtateſman than an orator, upon conduct like this.

Εςι γὰρ, ἐςιν ἡσυχια δικαία και συμΦέρουσα τῇ πόλει, ἣν ὃι πολλοὶ τῶν πολιτῶν ὑμᾶς ἁπλῶς ἄγετε. Αλλ' οὐ ταύτην

In the Whig Club, alſo, they are as active, as virulent, and as malignant as ever. They diſtort the public ſituation in falſe and virulent harangues. They cheer their little men with invectives againſt the miniſtry, and mis-ſtatements of our political intereſts; and all that they advance paſſes unrefuted into general circulation, through the medium of their party newſpapers.

ταύτην οὗτος ἄγα τὴν ἡσυχιαν, πολλῆ γε καὶ δῆ· ἀλλ' ἀποςὰς, ὅταν αὐλῶ δόξῃ, τῆς πολιτείας (πολλάκις δὲ δοκῆ) Φυλάτε ὁτιηίκα ἐςὲ μεσοὶ τῇ συνεχῶς λέγονΘ, ἢ παρὰ τῆς τύχης τί συμβέβήκεν ἐναντίωμα, ἢ ἄλλό τι δύσκολον γέγονε· (πολλὰ δὲ τὰ ἀνθρωπινα·) ἔτ' ἐπὶ τόυΐω τῶ καιρῶ ῥήτωρ, ἐξαίΦνης ἐκ τῆς ἡσυχίας, ὥσπερ πνεῦμα, ἐΦάνη, καὶ τεΦωνασκηκὼς καὶ, συναλεχὼς ῥήματα καὶ λόγυς, συνεῖρα τυτυς σαΦῶς, καὶ απνευςὶ, ὄνησιν μὲν οὐδεμίαν Φεροντας, ϗδ ἀγαθϗ κτῆσιν ουδενΘ, συμΦορὰν δὲ τῷ τυχόντι τῶν πολιτων, καὶ κοινὴν αἰσχυνήν.

For there is, yes, there is a ſtate of retirement, honeſt and advantageous to the ſtate. Many of you, my countrymen, enjoy it in artleſs integrity. But his retirement is not of this kind. Far from it! He frequently retires at his pleaſure from the public ſervice, and watches until you grow tired of ſome conſtant ſpeaker, until fortune has traverſed your deſigns or involved you in ſome of thoſe various calamities incident to humanity. Inſtantly the Orator ruſhes, like a tempeſt, from his retreat: his voice is already exerciſed—his words and periods are prepared—he delivers them with breathleſs vehemence and volubility, but to no uſeful purpoſe; with no effect of any real importance. They involve his fellow citizens in diſtreſs, and are a diſgrace to his country.

Demoſthenes Orat. de Corona.

The object of that aſſociation was reprehenſible in its firſt inſtitution. It was a party inſtrument planned and erected for the ſole purpoſe of forcing a change of Miniſters from the Crown by factious clamour. I do not deny that it originally contained many perſons of cultivated mind and reſpectable character. Some of their names may be found ſtill lingering on the club roll. You will not ſuppoſe that I include, in this deſcription, the few perſons of rank and fortune who hold the hammer at the Crown and Anchor, and fulfil the utmoſt limit of their talents when they regulate the bottle ceremonials of a drunken meeting. Perſons of this deſcription are a ſort of Political Sumpter Mule, who bear the expences of a party, when they are out of power, and carry the ornamental equipage and gala-furniture of Government, with grave and ſtately dulneſs, when they are led into place. But if we muſt exclude them from the firſt rank, we ought not to confound them with the general rubbage materials of the club.

Theſe laſt are an ill-ſorted gang, ſuch as are readily picked up in a large and corrupted city; a mob of writers for public prints; of politicians without knowledge; of lawyers without buſineſs; of men of faſhion without fortune; and of tradeſmen without employment. Moſt of them in the jaws of bankruptcy and ruin. All

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of them at war with the wholeſome reſtraints and ſober demeanour of a well-ordered government. Men who turn the reſtleſſneſs of their own minds, and the melancholy conſequences of their own faults, into a charge of high miſdemeanour, and crime againſt the miniſtry; whoſe diſcontents do not ariſe from any general grievance, but, have their ſource in a want of induſtry to encreaſe their means to the capacious ſize of their appetites; or of fortitude to reduce their appetites within the narrow compaſs of their means.

What are we to think of thoſe candidates for the government of a great and virtuous people, who foment and cheriſh, and conſort with ſuch a rabble-rout? In mercy to the oppoſition leaders, we may hope that their hearts and deſigns are not in uniſon with thoſe of their company; we may ſuppoſe that this club is nothing more than the humble rags in which they are clad during the period of diſtreſs, and which they would haſten to ſhake off in more proud and proſperous days. Still what are we to conclude from their conduct in thoſe meetings which they hold? The wiſdom and manly port of Ulyſſes muſt beam from beneath the ſordid covering of his diſguiſe; but what traces of the patriot hero are manifeſt in the conduct of the New Whig party? Is it decent or fitting for a grave and honeſt ſtates-

man to hold his councils amidſt the clangor of glaſſes, and the loud huzzas of a tumultuous and drunken meeting? Is he to intermingle his anxious cares, his ſober enquiries, his comprehenſive plans for the public weal with ambiguous toaſts, with obſcene jeſts, with low buffoonery, with laſcivious ſongs, and with the riotous acclamations of his wine-ſtruck companions?

An appropriate toaſt gives his cue to Mr. Fox, for an harangue upon the ruinous proſpects of the country. In the alternate order of the exhibition, the aſſembly are conſoled with the melodious vociferations of Mr. Incledon. The evoe bravo of ſome yelping reformer ſtarts Mr. Sheridan from his chair. The room re-echos with denunciations of impeachment, and the audience kindle with reſentment at the encreaſe of influence, and the creation of peers. Soon "liſtening envy drops her ſnakes" at the warbled incantations of Mr. Dignum. Such is the bill of entertainment in this mongrel ſhew of revelry and care, where orators and ſong-men, patriots and players, ſeverally diſplay their powers, and labour for the plaudits of their audience in the ſucceſſive ſhiftings of the various ſcenes.

Indeed, my dear Sir, I take no pleaſure in the picture I have drawn; it is a melancholy, a very melancholy augury for the country, when men of talents conceive that they can ſtruggle into power, by means like theſe.

I ſhall

I ſhall always be very ſlow to impute a deliberate deſign of overturning the conſtitution to thoſe gentlemen who are ſuppoſed to direct the proceedings of the New Whigs. But what is any man to conclude from their conduct in parliament, and in this club, if he has no other means to aſcertain their intentions? Are not the French Directory, who greedily attend to our oppoſition prints while they arbitrarily ſuppreſs their own, invited by theſe arts to conſider the conqueſt of this country as feaſible by thoſe means which they have employed with ſucceſs againſt the reſt of Europe? May they not fairly infer from ſuch proceedings the propagation of their principles among us, and count upon the Whig Club, as a proviſional government already formed to ſuperſede the legiſlature? The New Whigs applauded the revolution of France under all its mutations. They have defended her moderation and ſincerity, in all her tranſactions. They have laboured to humble the high ſpirit of this country, and to reconcile us to conditions of peace the moſt degrading and injurious. They repreſent the republic, (and God knows how falſely they do it) as flouriſhing under a free government, while they deſcribe Great Britain, as reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery, in which reſiſtance to the executive power is reſolved into a mere matter of prudence. They extol the vigor of the French repreſentative ſyſtem, and

they decry our own. as a decayed and uſeleſs incumbrance. Finally, as if to accelerate that ruin of the conſtitution, which they denounce, in imitation of the firſt anarchiſts in France, they form a political club, who aſſemble to deceive the people, and to controul the legiſlature.

The miſchief of this conduct, does not lie in mere poſſibility and ſuppoſition. It has quickened a monſter into life, which may coſt this country much pain and blood to deſtroy. The dictators of France count upon our internal diviſions as means ready formed to ſubdue us. They erect their hopes of ſucceſs upon the diſaffection of ſome of us, and the indifference and cowardice of the reſt. Hence it is, and I ſay it with indignant ſhame, that the manifeſto to their Army of England is nothing more than a brief and unexaggerated abſtract of a ſpeech made to the Whig Club during the laſt ſummer.

There may be ſome who condemn the conduct of oppoſition for deſerting their ſeats in parliament, and transferring their place of ſitting to the Whig Club, and yet they may approve of thoſe meaſures which they recommend to the country.

This is a poſition well worthy of diſcuſſion. The people of Great Britain ought to liſten to

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good advice from whatever quarter it may come. I will, therefore, with your leave, examine thoſe three great points which remain at iſſue between Miniſters and Oppoſition; theſe are the conduct to be obſerved towards Ireland, the ſubject of Peace, and the preſent ſyſtem of Taxation.

I have condemned the practices of oppoſition in the Siſter Country, at a time when I did not uſually queſtion the propriety of their meaſures. I was of opinion, that they laboured with unuſual diligence to ſtrike the roots of their party deep and wide, throughout that kingdom, and uſed every artifice to ſeduce her into a dangerous union with a minority in the Engliſh legiſlature. The deſign has been avowed by Mr. Fox, in his ſpeech upon the ſtate of Ireland, during the laſt ſeſſion *. But its completion would be ruinous to the proſperity and mutual attachment of thoſe two great and eſſential members of the empire. If the interference of Ireland ſhould materially affect the ſituation of domeſtic parties in Great

* His words, as taken in Woodfall's report of the debates of laſt ſeſſion, Vol. II. p. 519 are, "This diſcuſſion (of the ſtate of "Ireland) may be attended with beneficial conſequences, becauſe "it will ſhew the people of Ireland, that it is not the French "alone to whom they may look for a redreſs of their grievances, "that there is at leaſt a portion of the Britiſh Houſe of Commons, "who feel for them under oppreſſion, and who are deſirous to "adminiſter to their relief."

Britain, the independence of the latter would be utterly deſtroyed, ſince her legiſlature would be influenced by opinions diſtinct from thoſe of the people whom they repreſent. If, on the other hand, as is more probable, the weight of Ireland could work no change upon the internal government of Great Britain, the attempt would nouriſh all that animoſity which ſtrong paſſions engender from diſappointed hopes, and the reciprocal affections of the countries would be gradually weakened, and finally deſtroyed. Thoſe who conſider what took place upon the regency, and the efforts which were made by oppoſition at that time, will not look upon theſe reflections as either improbable or unfounded.

The objections, which have been taken to the preſent ſyſtem reſpecting Ireland, are the non-emancipation of the Catholics, as it is called; the adoption of an oppreſſive and military ſyſtem, in ruling the inhabitants; and a vigorous oppoſition to a reform of their Parliament.

The real ſtate of that country is but little underſtood by the great body of the Britiſh people. I ſhall endeavour to explain it from ſources not leſs authentic than thoſe of that noble Earl, who has lately rendered the ſituation of his native country the ſubject of parliamentary diſcuſ-

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ſion. To do this with effect, I muſt take up matters a little farther back than the preſent period.

The Iriſh people are divided by religious tenets into three ſects: the Proteſtants, properly ſo called; the Preſbyterians, or (as it is more faſhionable to denominate them) the Proteſtant Diſſenters; and the Roman Catholics. For more than a century paſt, the great maſs of freehold property in the kingdom has been veſted in the former. They have been ſolely entruſted with the principal functions and offices of government, and have been conſidered as the great bond of union between that country and Great Britian.

The Proteſtant Diſſenters obtained their chief ſettlements in Ireland, during the reign of the firſt James, and the period of Cromwell's uſurpation. The northern counties, in which they particularly dwell, not being ſo fruitful as the remaining parts of Ireland, they have turned their attention to manufacture, and have cultivated the linen trade with great ſucceſs. If I am rightly informed, England imports and pays for a greater quantity of their manufacture, than the total amount, in value, of all her exports to that kingdom. This part of the country, therefore, derives a more direct and palpable advantage, from

from the union with Great Britain, than the reſt of the iſland.

Ever ſince the reformation, the political maxims of all European nations have been influenced by their religious tenets. This principle has prevailed particularly in Ireland, from a concurrence of various circumſtances. It has given riſe to an alliance between the proteſtant and diſſenting intereſts there, in oppoſition to the Catholics. They conſidered theſe laſt as a common and outnumbering enemy, from whoſe opinions, both religious and civil, they had more to dread than from their own private diſagreements.

The reſtraints upon the Iriſh Diſſenters, therefore, were never exceſſive, and during the preſent reign they have been wholly removed. They are now upon the ſame footing, in reſpect to civil rights, with the members of the eſtabliſhed church. There are no conſtitutional grievances of which they can complain, unleſs the payment of tithes, and a reform in Parliament are to be accounted as ſuch. The very war, which has brought inevitable diſtreſs upon ſome parts of the empire, might have been rendered a ſource of opulence to them. Having raged ſo widely throughout Germany, it annihilated the linen manufactures of that country, and opened new and extenſive marts to Iriſh induſtry.

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The third ſect are, the Roman Catholics. They are ſpread over the remaining provinces of Ireland, and are deſcended from the ancient inhabitants of that country, and from the firſt Engliſh ſettlers who arrived among them.

For theſe two centuries, until the preſent reign, theſe poor people were bleſſed only as Iſſachar was bleſſed. They were conſidered as mere ſlaves and victims, turned out to labour, or uſed in ſacrifice as public convenience required, or prejudice prompted. No Roman province, no colony in the Eaſt or in the Weſt, no dependency of ancient Lacedemon or Athens, no ally of modern France, were ever more keenly and ſyſtematically fleeced and pillaged than theſe unhappy people. Every thing was made a pretext for plunder. They ſtruggled for liberty under Charles I. and were plundered. They ſtruggled for royalty againſt the rebellion, and were plundered. They fought for James II. and were plundered. The robberies of the rebellion were legalized at the reſtoration. The robberies of the revolution were ſecured by a long and grievous train of pains, penalties, and diſabilities, too weighty for any people to ſtir under. Engliſh adventurers, Scotch adventurers, Dutch adventurers, were let looſe to fatten at their expence, and their faireſt poſſeſſions were torn from the

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owners to enrich pimps, paraſites, minions, generals, ſtate creditors and land ſurveyors.

But a new and happier order of things has ariſen during the preſent reign. The Catholics were firſt admitted to participate the bleſſings of that cup which the revolution beſtowed upon the Engliſh people by that ſovereign who is now upon the throne. If they are grateful, as I am well aſſured they are, it is their preſent king whom they muſt praiſe as the father of their liberties.

The only diſabilities that now remain of that long catalogue which formerly ſeparated them in rights from their fellow-ſubjects, are, that they can neither ſit in parliament, nor fill the higher offices of government.

The Britiſh Cabinet, in adviſing the former meaſures of humanity and juſtice, have departed very far from thoſe maxims of government, which have influenced their predeceſſors for two centuries paſt. I cannot blame them for pauſing to examine the effects of what has been accompliſhed, before they hazard what remains to be done. Having once ſtirred the ballaſt of the veſſel, it is wiſe and prudent to try how ſhe ſails and ſettles, before they again venture to alter her trim. If any thing were wanting to impreſs this great political truth on our minds, the woeful experience of

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our neighbours ſhould teach us, that political innovations, however plauſible, muſt be made with trembling caution.

God forbid, however, that I ſhould become the advocate of galling diſtinctions, which uphold no great political good. It is raſh preſumption in any individual to pronounce deciſively upon a meaſure which may be viewed in ſo many lights, and involves a variety of weighty conſiderations. But ſo far as I can ſee this momentous queſtion in all its bearings, it appears to me, that there will be little danger in concluding what has been ſo well commenced. The political relation of this country and Ireland, as affected by religious differences, has been fundamentally changed by the creation of a republic in France, and by the total want of religion among her rulers. Theſe events have diſſolved that alarming connection which formerly united the Iriſh Catholics to the French Government. If the union of theſe kingdoms is to be hereafter ſhaken through any attachment to French manners, and a novel conſtitution, the ſtorm which is to convulſe the empire will not come from the Catholics. It will ariſe amidſt that "old leaven" who have been ſo laviſhly praiſed for rebellion and regicide, and upon whom the temperate glories of the revolution have been moſt untruly beſtowed *.

* Mr. Fox's ſpeech on the affairs of Ireland. Woodfall's reports of the Debates of laſt Seſſion, Vol. II. p. 498.

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The wiſhes of every man, who does not ſee an abſolute neceſſity for thoſe degrading reſtraints, muſt be, with me, that ſuch opprobrious and mercileſs badges of guilt ſhould be removed from the ſhoulders of the Catholics, wholly, radically and promptly. The boon has been well earned by the patience and long ſuffering, by the conſtancy and unſhaken loyalty of the upper ranks among them. It is a ſacrifice, if it can be called a ſacrifice, not leſs agreeable to policy, than grateful to juſtice.

A noble mind diſdains to be debarred from hopes which are thrown open to his rivals, however remote his proſpect to enjoy them. The people feel that they are degraded by the diſtinction made between them and the reſt of his Majeſty's ſubjects. It is here that the chief ſting of theſe diſabilities feſters. The immediate advantages of unbarring the avenues to thoſe places which are now ſhut againſt them, would be extremely trivial. They are not in a ſtate to profit by the privilege which they claim. It would be very fallacious to eſtimate the grievance, as if a ſimilar reſtraint were impoſed upon three fourths of the people of Great Britain. Thoſe who are to govern or to ſerve the ſtate in its higher offices, muſt poſſeſs ſome rank, education, and means of life. In Ireland, perſons of this deſcription are almoſt wholly confined to the reformed religions.

A few

A few noblemen and gentlemen of landed property, ſome rich leaſeholders, and not many opulent perſons who have realized money by ſhopkeeping and trade, conſtitute the entire Catholic gentry. It is from the loweſt orders of the people that this religion derives its greateſt ſtrength of numbers; from farmers of a few acres of land at a rack rent, from labourers, menial ſervants, and handicraftmen. To talk to ſuch poor perſons of their wretchedneſs, in being ſuperſeded and cut out by law from all chance and hope of becoming Members of Parliament, Revenue Commiſſioners, Vice Treaſurers, Chancellors, and Judges, would be to inſult, not to pity them.

It ſo happens, however, that the upper ranks of the Catholics, who are alone directly intereſted in the attainment of this enfranchiſement, are well affected to adminiſtration; while the inferior claſſes to whom it is of little importance, are in ſome counties extremely unquiet. I do not urge this as a reaſon for witholding conceſſion; I do it to ſhew, that we muſt trace thoſe diſcontents which exiſt to ſome other cauſes.

Theſe cauſes are to be found in the machinations of France acting upon the "old republican leaven" in Belfaſt, and other places, long previous to the commencement of hoſtilities. Dazzled

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by the progreſs of the French revolution, which has raiſed in its violent and giddy whirls ſo many wicked and obſcure men to the top of public affairs, a ſet of needy and abandoned individuals have planned the moſt dangerous and ſingular conſpiracy that is to be found in the annals of mankind. Its object is to effect a ſeparation between Ireland and this country, and to form a republican government under the protection of France. Its reſources are the ſeduction of the loweſt orders of the people, under the falſe, and now ſtale pretext, of equality and freedom. Every ſtratagem which cunning and want of principle could ſuggeſt, has been adopted to detach them from the preſent conſtitution. Seditious newſpapers, pamphlets, and treaſonable hand bills have been circulated among them. In public, frequent aſſemblies, violent reſolutions, and more violent ſpeeches, were employed to inflame the paſſions even to madneſs. In private, every artifice was attempted which could work upon the weakneſs of the human mind. Diſſenters in Dublin, in Belfaſt, and in the remainder of the North, were the firſt movers and principal ſupport of this conſpiracy. But they were aware how impoſſible it was to move ſociety from its foundations, as they wiſhed to move it, unleſs the great maſs of the people were ſeduced to aſſiſt their deſign. For this purpoſe, the Catholics were to be gained.

Forth-

Forthwith, a new and unheard of cry was ſet up, by theſe profligate innovators, of commiſeration and regard for a ſect whoſe principles of government they abhorred, and whoſe tenets of religion they deſpiſed. Emancipation of their Catholic brethren, and a Reform in Parliament, went forth as the public watch-words. But the hopes held up to private converts were an agrarian diſtribution of property, and a total exemption from tithes. Senſible that they had to operate upon a brave but volatile people, they purſued the ſame plan which has ſucceeded in France, but has fortunately failed in Great Britain. They proceeded to augment, unite, and diſcipline their converts by affiliated clubs. Theſe venomous and baneful weeds were trained to creep and climb until they ſhould fill the country, and choak up the growth of every thing that was noble and generous in the ſoil. Nothing was neglected to enſure ſucceſs, and to prevent diſcovery. The wretched conſpirators were bound to each other by horrid and myſtic oaths. The matter of their tremendous pledge, was to be faithful to France, to preſerve inviolable ſecrecy, and to propagate their principles by encreaſing their converts. Aſſaſſination and maſſacre were added as precautions more flagitious and ſecure. Friends, brethren, fathers, every endearing relation of life, were to be ſcrupulouſly immolated to this dreadful object. Any attempt to expiate crime by a diſcloſure of guilt,

was followed by inevitable deſtruction. If the murderers of an informer had leiſure to indulge their ſportive feelings, the terrors of diſſolution were aggravated by cruel and lingering tortures. Every magiſtrate who ſtepped forward to diſcharge his duty, and preſerve the peace; who ventured to ſuppreſs their meetings, to caution the wavering, and apprehend the guilty, was marked and written down for death. He was ſhot from behind ſome wall or hedge, and ſometimes in the open day. But if chance or prudence preſerved him, for a little ſpace, from the aim of theſe impatient lurkers for his blood, his houſe was beſet, and forced by a numerous banditti, who murdered him amidſt the cries, and in the very embrace and boſom of his family.

Not leſs active to ſecure weapons than to prevent diſcovery, they aſſembled in large bodies during the night, they ſurrounded every houſe where arms were kept, and tore them from the owners under menaces of ſword and fire. In ſome places they laid the opulent farmers under contribution; in many more they committed acts of violence the moſt atrocious and irreparable. It was impoſſible for any individual to reſiſt their attacks by the mere ſtrength of his private family. The enemy ſtood as often within his doors as without. Servants fed by their maſter's bounty, and brought up under his roof, were ſworn into the conſpiracy;

racy; and have been known, in ſome inſtances, to plan the attack, and to point out the opportunity for aſſaſſination. Againſt outrages ſo extenſive and enormous, there was no remedy but in flight, or the interference of a military force. Before they did interfere, many quiet and reſpectable families were expelled from their habitations by terror of thoſe ruffians.

During theſe nocturnal arrays and domiciliary viſits, every other means were purſued which could advance their treaſonous deſigns. Attempts were made to corrupt the ſoldiery. A correſpondence was kept up with France to expedite an invaſion. A large quantity of arms was tranſmitted from thence. Fortunately a principal conſignment was ſeized before it reached the intended place of debarkation. A plan was ſet on foot to ſeize the perſon of the Lord Lieutenant; and, in ſome counties, it was deſigned to maſſacre every individual who was deemed hoſtile to that revolution which the conſpirators were reſolved to promote.

Theſe charges againſt the United Iriſhmen and Defenders do not reſt upon vague rumour, or individual aſſertion. They are authenticated by the moſt clear and conſiſtent evidence, openly delivered at various trials which have taken place in Ireland, from the period of Jackſon's conviction, to that of Lord Carhampton's tenants

for conſpiring his murder. The witneſſes were numerous, conſiſtent in their narratives, and unconnected with each other. Their teſtimonies have been ſanctioned by the verdict of juries, in every county where theſe troubles have prevailed. Many of the guilty have ſuffered the penalty of the law. Many more have received life from the mercy of the crown, and not a few have retired to America, anticipating conviction in a ſenſe of their crimes.

When the ſchemes of the United Iriſhmen, in the North, and of the Defenders in the counties of Meath, Dublin and Kildare, were thus unequivocally proved by their conduct, and the confeſſion of their accomplices, what other meaſures could a wiſe and prudent government purſue, but thoſe which have been employed? Were they to tolerate ſeditious meetings and conventions, aſſembled notoriouſly for promoting rebellion and over-throwing the conſtitution; or to repreſs them by vigorous and wholeſome ſtatutes?

But it is contended, that the ſole object of theſe meetings was to exact a Reform in Parliament, and to procure Emancipation for the Catholics; and that the laws paſſed to ſuppreſs them were new and tyrannical encroachments upon the national freedom.

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The conduct of the New Whigs, in judging of motives and meaſures, is in open violation of all the uſual rules which regulate the opinions of mankind. Where all legiſlators have found it neceſſary to innovate, by making new laws framed to meet new exigencies, and to keep pace with the progreſs of human crimes, theſe ſtateſmen are enemies to innovation. They are venerators of antiquity, and hold it ſacrilege to deface the pillars of the conſtitution. But in the eſſential form of government, which every wiſe legiſlator trembles to break in upon, they are eager to dabble with their dirty experiments. They feel neither doubt, nor remorſe, nor ſcruple, but rip up, and cut, and patch, and diſfigure the conſtitution, to their own idle, capricious, new-fangled, flimſy taſte. For the laws of treaſon and ſedition, as they were paſſed ſome centuries ago, they are inſpired with ſacred awe, and they kindle with pious zeal againſt thoſe who would depart from the cuſtoms of their Fathers. But they feel no ſuch enthuſiaſm for that venerable altar of liberty upon which theſe portions of our rights were inſcribed and conſecrated. They will not ſpare, nor do they pardon thoſe who wiſh to ſpare from their unhallowed hands, the holy edifice itſelf, in which, and through which, this country has been ſo often bleſſed.

They are eager to attribute the moſt injurious intentions to government, and the friends of the conſtitution. Neither proteſtations, nor proofs, nor the very nature of things, can ſatisfy their doubts, or allay their ſuſpicions. But in balance to this want of charity, they yield their aſſent to the profeſſions of the French Republic, and of its friends in theſe kingdoms, with the moſt liberal credulity. Whatever is weak in them, they are ſedulous to make ſtrong. On the one ſide, every meaſure is corrupt, wicked, inſincere, and inſtituted on a ſtudied deſign to deſtroy the liberties of the empire; on the other, all is humanity, ſincerity, virtue, peace, and the ſacred love of order, freedom and the conſtitution. The treaſonable deſigns of the United Iriſhmen have been proved by writings, by oaths, by confeſſions, by every means of proof through which conviction can be brought home to the human heart. But the New Whigs will diſregard what is proved, and believe what is profeſſed!

It has been made another charge againſt the adminiſtration of Ireland, that they have impriſoned many innocent perſons upon accuſations of treaſon, without proof, or ſuſpicion of their guilt.

It cannot be fairly contended, from the circumſtance of an acquittal, that there was no ground to accuſe ſuch as have been arraigned. The jury who

who tries the indictment may negative, by their verdict, the abſolute concluſion of guilt. But the jury who found that indictment, aſcertained by the very ſame forum, a probable ground to accuſe. It certainly may have happened that ſome innocent perſons have undergone a temporary confinement. This might neceſſarily enſue from the artful conſtitution of the conſpiracy. It was ſubtle and extended in its nature. The inſtruments were obſcure, illiterate and deſperate men. Its plan was carried on by ſubordinate and limited ſocieties, in detached parts, and at different meetings. No perſon could have ſeen the whole of their tranſactions in a regular ſeries, and the moſt active muſt, in ſome inſtances, have relied upon the teſtimony of others. Hence it might happen that ſome individuals did ſuffer the legal conſequences of ſuſpicion upon ill-founded grounds of accuſation. But hence it did alſo happen, that many who were deep in guilt were enabled to eſcape. The principle, which allows of ſuſpending the Habeas Corpus Act, admits of arreſts upon proofs and ſuſpicions too feeble to convict upon trial. All that can be required of thoſe to whom, for the common good, this high power is entruſted in dangerous times, is, that it ſhould be uſed with conſcientious diſcretion. It is not pretended by the moſt malignant croaker, that innocent and unhappy men have been maliciouſly cruſhed by this authority

to gratify private reſentments. A ſpeedy liberation, without the expence or hazard of a trial, is the very reverſe of proof that it was exerciſed in wantonneſs and oppreſſion. The facts, therefore, which are ſtated in this inculpation of the Iriſh Government might be admitted, and the imputation of blame drawn from them, would ſtill be unjuſt.

But there is no man who has taken ſalt at the ſame table with a Republican, who does not feel that many of the liberated had more reaſon to thank the mercy of Government in their deliverance, than to arraign its juſtice in their confinement. In ſome inſtances the proofs were dubious. In others a diſcloſure of the evidence would have furthered the eſcape of more capital and daring offenders. The object of conviction was not to ſhed human blood, but to make an impreſſive example upon a deluded people; and it is the wiſe and wholeſome lenity of Government, which the New Whigs convert into the accuſation of rancorous and mercileſs oppreſſion.

Another charge which has been made againſt the preſent Government is, that they have diſarmed particular diſtricts, and ſuperſeded the civil adminiſtration of the country, by introducing a military police.

Inſtead of perverting the political maxims of tranquil times to critical ſituations for which they were never

never framed, let any honeſt man ſay what he ſhould think of the folly and debility of a government, which, when the country was threatened with invaſion, left arms in the hands of thoſe patricides, who were eager to join the invaders. Arms, in which the poſſeſſors had no property, but through robbery or treaſon. Arms, which were originally forced from loyal owners, or elſe procured by French gold and French aſſiſtance.

Ought not the military to have been called in to oppoſe a force which the civil power was found too feeble to quell? A force, formidable from its numbers, its object, its ferocity, its accurate and prompt intelligence, and its being deſtitute of all viſible and permanent ſtation. When the uſual and common arm of the law had been tried, and was found too weak, either the country was to be undone, or means of more than common ſtrength were to be called forth to quell this power of darkneſs, which ſpead univerſal terror and diſmay under cover of night, and was ſcattered by the approach of morning.

When a military force acts over an extenſive diſtrict, ſome caſes of particular hardſhip, and even of outrage may poſſibly occur. A brave diſciplinarian, whoſe ſituation is ſubordinate, cannot always diſtinguiſh between the letter and the ſpirit of his orders. Individuals, when flushed with power newly acquired, will ſometimes reel

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beyond the ſober boundary line, to which diſcretion limits the application of force. I am well aſſured, however, that the inſtances of oppreſſion, which have been recently brought forward by a noble Earl in the Houſe of Lords, have been groſsly miſrepreſented to him *. That gallant officer is too well acquainted with the Britiſh ſoldiery, to charge them with indiſcriminate and wanton outrage in the execution of their orders. If his high rank and general reſidence in this country could have allowed him the opportunity of being well acquainted with the ſituations of the diſaffected diſtricts, the temper of the inhabitants, and the treatment which the army has in general received, he would find every reaſon to indulge his inclinations in applauding the ſteady, temperate, loyal, and forbearing conduct of his Majeſty's troops.

But if we were to admit all the unfortunate caſes which have been alledged to their utmoſt extent,—if we were to emblazon them with cir-

* A poor word-ſpinning democratic Baronet has ſtated in the Houſe of Commons, that he has been informed that 4000 families were burnt out of their habitations in the county of Armagh. As he is a member of the Correſponding Society, we may give a good gueſs at the ſource of his information. It is fortunate, that when his correſpondent was ſo wicked as to tell a deliberate and malignant falſhood, he was ſo fooliſh as to exceed all bounds of credibility.

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cumſtances of ten-fold aggravation, ſtill they would ſink into inſignificance when contraſted with the ſavage and frequent barbarities practiced by United Iriſhmen and Defenders previous to the introduction of the preſent police. It is true, that if it had not been brought forward, the perturbed diſtricts could not now complain of domeſtic regulations, which the Iriſh peaſantry have uſually followed as the habitual and ſalubrious law of an induſtrious life; nor of coercions applied to prevent opportunities of guilt; nor of force oppoſed againſt actual violence and open crime. But all Ireland muſt have deplored, that a French conſpiracy had raiſed its audacious front, and marched throughout the kingdom with giant ſtrides;—that the nobility, the gentry, the yeomanry, and every one who had a permanent intereſt in the ſafety of their country were diſarmed and defenceleſs, while a diſordered and miſguided peaſantry paraded the land, arrayed in the very arms of which they had deſpoiled their ſuperiors, inflicting death, robbery, confiſcation, violation, and oaths of fealty upon whomſoever they pleaſed; public juſtice eluded, inſulted, and openly beaten down; no ſafety for property, for conſcience, or for life; timid men forced either to contravene their allegiance by treaſonable aſſociations, or to violate involuntary oaths at the hazard of their lives; while the honourable and

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reſolutely good, muſt either determine to abandon their dwellings and their property for an attachment to their ſovereign, the conſtitution of the country, and the integrity of the empire, or elſe to lay their head each night upon the pillow, counting on a melancholy chance of life until morning, only from the doubtful ſucceſs of a ſtruggle to preſerve it.

Evils ſo rapid and alarming in their progreſs required a countercheck unuſually vigorous and active. The remedy may be ſevere, but it is efficacious; and its operation is mild compared with the tortures of the malady it is applied to cure. A rabid ſlaver everſive of reaſon, and poiſonous to life, overruns and infects the country. The cauſtic, which ſearches out and cauterizes the venom, may inflict a deep and burning wound. But if it be not applied, the inevitable reſult is madneſs and death. To withdraw it in the moment of operation, would be mercileſs barbarity; and bleſſed be that humane and ſteady ſkill, which works out laſting health from temporary pain.

Theſe are not the cold ſentiments of a ſtranger ſolicitous to preſerve the dominion of Ireland to this country, and regardleſs of the means. They are ſeen and felt by the yeomanry and gentry of that iſland, whoſe deareſt intereſts are involved in the

the event; they are now in arms to give effect to the ſyſtem, and to co-operate with that military who are denounced as the bane and ruin of the country.

The diſturbed ſtate of Ireland, and the attachment of the conſpirators to France, is at length admitted by the New Whigs; but they perverſely attribute the evils which ſubſiſt to the very remedies introduced to ſuppreſs them. It is not eaſy to conceive upon what falſe principle of argument they ſtrive to remove the odium of criminality from acknowledged rebels, and impoſe it upon government. The ſtrong preſumption of guilt lies heavy upon thoſe who riſe againſt legitimate power, which they are bound by the law and by their oaths to obey. Acts of tyrannous and grinding oppreſſion may undoubtedly excuſe ſociety in ſhaking off that government which abuſes the great object of its creation. But it ſhould be the awful work of a whole nation, rouſed beyond the ultimate pitch of human endurance, by flagrant and ſubſtantial crimes againſt the public weal. It is not the denial of ſome theoretical innovation, demanded by a club of ſhort-ſighted men, that can juſtify a recourſe to arms by their proſelytes. Fair and ſober liberty is not to be defiled and defecrated by barbarous ceremonies, in which the ungirt votaries celebrate their orgies by frightful wounds and frantic gaſhes. Unleſs

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the want of a Reform in Parliament can juſtify a rebellion in 40, or 50,000 perſons, againſt the wiſhes of the reſt of the nation who exceed three millions in their aggregate numbers, there can be no juſtification for the preſent conſpirators. Moſt aſſuredly they are not to extract a palliation of inſurgency from the conſequences of their own inſurrection. Nor are they to enumerate the reſtraints uſed to repreſs rebellion, amongſt thoſe hardſhips which have cauſed their revolt.

But miniſters are held up to public obloquy becauſe they do not now concede a Parliamentary Reform to the United Iriſhmen and Defenders as certain means to allay thoſe diſcontents which agitate the country. Mr. Fox, " good eaſy man," knows no other principle of government but to concede. To oppoſe uniformly whatever is ſuggeſted by adminiſtration, and to concede as uniformly whatever is demanded of them, conſtitutes the great maxim of his politics. Thoſe who recollect by whom this clamour for a reform in Parliament was raiſed, will perceive that the conceſſion, if made, would be of little avail. It is to Hamilton Rowan, Napper Tandy, and others of that caſt, to whom their country is indebted for the excellent device. The New Whigs are mere ſecond hand agents to promote a plan, which met its firſt great patrons in the accomplices of Mr. Jackſon, and the part-

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ners of his correſpondence with the French Republic. What tenets are the diſciples of that ſchool likely to hold, whoſe principal maſters have been guilty of treaſon? The conduct of thoſe who are at liberty to indulge their hopes and their wiſhes without diſguiſe, may give a clue to the ſentiments of the gang that are at home. Thoſe tried patriots, Meſſrs. Muir and Paine, were likewiſe advocates of a reform in Parliament *. Free from perſonal motives, they had nothing more in contemplation than the glory and intereſt of the empire. Exile has aſſayed the patriotiſm of Themiſtocles, of Cimon, Demoſthenes, and Camillus, in contradiction to a ſentence of condemnation paſſed by their fellow citizens. But our patriots ſcorn to manifeſt their integrity by heaping new ſervices upon their ungrateful country. The precious hours of their relegation, are conſumed in deviſing ſchemes for the ſubjugation and plunder of the people whom they profeſs to love. They applaud that invaſion, of which the avowed object is, to tear from us the dominion of the ſeas, and to eſtabliſh the commerce of France upon the ruins of our own.

* Paine's Rights of Man, were diffuſed over Ireland with unwearied induſtry.—Muir correſponded with the United Iriſhmen. He circulated their addreſs throughout Scotland. He propoſed, in one of the Scots affiliated Societies, to make a common cauſe with their Brethren in Ireland, and to anſwer an addreſs in which the latter had invited them ſo to do.

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As the repreſentative ſlaves of this imperial ſtate, they crouch down at thoſe very feaſts which prematurely celebrate the triumphs of France in the humiliation of Great Britain. They fawningly lick the feet of thoſe tyrants to whom they look up for the offals of that blood and devaſtation which may eſcape from their hands.

Examples, however, are unneceſſary to aſcertain the ſentiments of the United Iriſhmen. There is no man who is acquainted with the ſtate of Ireland, who is not well aſſured that they would defpiſe the meagre conceſſion, except, ſo far as it might prove the means of freſh and more deciſive changes; that they are rank, decided, incurable republicans, whoſe turbulence mildneſs cannot appeaſe, whoſe notions of Government no alteration can ſatisfy, ſhort of a conſtitution eſtabliſhed under the influence and guarranteed by the power of Republican France.

We are not bound to ſeek for other reaſons to reject this meaſure, than its inability to effect the purpoſe for which it is preſſed upon us. It might ſerve to animate the hopes of the Republicans, but it would not reconcile them to the preſent conſtitution.

Let us, however, aſſume for an inſtant, that this Reform would work all thoſe ſpecious wonders,

ders, which its advocates profeſs; that, ſubdued by this potent ſpell, the United Iriſhmen and Defenders would forget their oaths of rebellion, and their habits of inſurrection, and quietly ſubſide into the peaceable maſs of the induſtrious community. Let us alſo ſuppoſe, that the Solons, the Lycurgi, the Minos's and Pompilii, of this enlightened fraternity, had unanimouſly concerted a determinate plan, for renovating the Commons Houſe of Parliament. That theſe patient ſages, having completed their toilſome reſearch into ancient inſtitutes, their accurate ſurvey of the information and political ſtate of their country, and their ſevere ſcrutiny of its cuſtoms and manners, had felt an inſpired concordance of opinions, and, reſting from their holy labours, had exultingly proclaimed the conſtitution they meant to beſtow upon their fellow-citizens, the beſt which they had capacity to receive. Let us further ſuppoſe, that it is wiſe to follow the dangerous precedent of conceſſion, made in times of diſtreſs and danger; a ſeaſon which ſtrips liberality of its genuine grace, and makes the largeſſes of benevolence reſemble the offerings of fear. Let us concede ſtill further, ſince conceſſion is to be the ruling principle, that government can looſe nothing of that reverence, which gives ſuch a light, but firm hold upon its ſubjects, by an unconditional ſurrender to the haughty demands of an armed rebellious aſſociation. Still, my dear Sir,

objections would remain behind, which it ſeems impoſſible to ſurmount.

The majority of the people of Ireland, do not demand this reform, and it would be neither juſt nor politic to condemn and recaſt the legiſlature of a country for the ſatisfaction of a turbulent few, to the diſguſt of the many who are peaceable. It is not the numerous difficulties which muſt occur in the plan and execution of every ſuch reform that would alone perplex and embarraſs us. A reform in the Iriſh Parliament involves a point of ſtill greater magnitude and peril than the mere changes which might enſue in the civil regulation of Ireland. It touches the connection of the countries and their union, as one common empire to the very heart. I need not ſpecify the reciprocal advantages which reſult to the Siſter Kingdoms, from this intimate conſolidation of their intereſts and their ſtrength. Among the conſequences which might follow, if Ireland were to form a diſtinct empire, of an inferior order, proportioned to her ſtrength, the moſt prominent is, that ſhe muſt lean either upon France or Great Britain for ſupport. From that moment ſhe would become the victim of internal agitation and diſquiet. Harraſſed by the intrigues of the reſpective partizans of her powerful neighbours, during peace, and made the bloody theatre of their moſt obſtinate

ſtinate conflicts, during war, ſhe would ſuffer more than Scotland ſuffered previous to the acceſſion of James VI. to the Engliſh throne. The large ſupport which ſhe derives from being conſidered as part of a powerful Empire would immediately ſink from under her. She could no longer derive any direct advantage from the extended trade, the immenſe capital, or the powerful navy of Great Britain. If ſhe looks at the preſent ſituation of America, with reſpect to foreign powers, ſhe will learn to appreciate theſe benefits at their real value. I do not urge this to diminiſh the advantages which reſult to Great Britain from her union with Ireland. They are of the utmoſt importance. But I do it to ſhew that the connection is at leaſt as beneficial to Ireland as to her. He is an enemy to the two countries, who conſiders them as ſeparate powers having diſtinct and rival intereſts. They are ſiſters of the ſame houſe, portions of one empire, demanding a reciprocal ſacrifice of partial accommodations and prejudices to their common good.

When the ſituation of the two Iſlands is taken up in this light, the legiſlature of Ireland appears as the moſt critical and complicated ſyſtem of government in Europe. It is not obnoxious to the majority of the people. It is fully competent to all the beneficial purpoſes of actual government, and it preſerves the harmony and

connection of the coutries. Can human underſtanding arrogate to itſelf the power of placing the balance more happily than long experience and a fortunate concurrence of events have fixed it? What perſon can ſay, he has found a more effectual mean to protect the weaker country from ſubjugation on the one hand, or the empire from breaking into pieces on the other? The hiſtory of diſtinct kingdoms united under one common head, and particularly the fate of thoſe detached ſovereignties which conſtitute the preſent territories of Spain and France, may teach us not to deſpiſe and reject a ſyſtem which has been gradually ſmoothed and ſhaped down to the habits, the opinions, the intereſts and the prejudices of the two kingdoms. A great, and therefore a cautious Stateſman, would not at any time volunteer an experiment, which might deſtroy that ſubtle and attracting matter, by which the countries cohere; and thus crumble the whole frame of the empire into disjointed atoms. He would particularly deprecate innovation during the continuance of a dangerous war. He would feel that he might thereby cripple the energies of government, while an artful enemy was fomenting dangerous diviſions among the people; and that no alteration could prove ſalutary, when conceſſion and arrangement muſt depend upon opportunity and fear, inſtead of a calm contemplation of expediency and right.

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The New Whigs, however, wiſh to hatch their reforms in a tranquil ſeaſon. They are the declared advocates of an immediate peace. But they are ſilent as to the means by which we are to obtain this fair bleſſing from the French Republic. Lord Malmeſbury's laſt negociation has removed any doubts which could exiſt as to the determination of the Directory to continue the war. It has, in my humble judgment, given us a fatal proof of the ardour with which our cabinet are bent on peace. To prove this, let us advert briefly to the papers laid before Parliament by his Majeſty's command.

Soon after the Negociation commenced, the French Plenipotentiaries demanded the abſolute ceſſion of *all* our conqueſts "*as an indiſpenſible* "*preliminary of the negociation of the peace* "*with England.*" They requeſt our ambaſſador to explain himſelf with regard to this reſtitution, and to conſent to it, if he is ſufficiently authoriſed ſo to do; if not, to *ſend a meſſenger* to his court, in order to procure him the neceſſary powers *. It is replied by Lord Malmeſbury "that his inſtructions do not authoriſe him "to admit, as a PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLE, "what the declarations of the French Commiſ-

* Official Papers, p. 29.

" ſioners ſeem intended to eſtabliſh*." The next diſpatch from his own court commands him to reject the claim as unreaſonable, and to demand a *contre projet*, ſince the plan of peace preſented on the part of Great Britain, had not been approved.† For two months, the French Miniſters, acting under immediate communications from the Directory, expreſsly aſſent to the propriety of this demand, and virtually abandon their own *ſine qua non* preliminary.‡ Under

* Official Papers, p. 30. † Ibid, p. 31.

‡ They aſſented to the propriety of giving in a *contre projet*, Off. Pap. p. 36. They gave our Miniſter room to expect it ſpeedily in a conference mentioned. ib. p. 36. They virtually ſurrendered their demand of ceſſion, as a preliminary to negociate, when they agreed to give in a *contre projet*. They did more. They ſhewed that they conſidered our propoſals as reaſonable, when the Plenipotentiaries of France declared, that the Directory " had conſulted their allies, and ſtated, that unleſs " they meant to continue the war, France muſt be releaſed from " her engagements, and enabled to a certain degree, to meet " our propoſals." Off. Pap. No. 29, p. 41, No. 30, p. 42. Thoſe who examine the papers of the ſecond negociation, will ſee that the French Executive Government, ſo long as they wiſhed to appear earneſt for the concluſion of peace, purſued thoſe very meaſures which our Miniſters contended that they ought to have purſued in the firſt. So much for the ingenious defenders of France, and the arraignment of our cabinet's ſincerity in Lord Malmeſbury's firſt miſſion. The compariſon will ſhew the people what reliance they ought to place upon the ingenious comments of the preſent oppoſition.

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the pretence of forming a *contre projet*, they procraſtinate all meaſures towards concluding a treaty. But, with the moſt inſidious views, they require that the appearance of deliberation and buſineſs ſhould be kept up, when nothing was going forward.

At length their domeſtic conſpiracy being ripened, the ſhew of conciliation became no longer neceſſary. The majority of the Directory had confirmed themſelves in abſolute power, by an act of injuſtice, more enormous than any eaſtern tyrant has heretofore committed, or than Aſiatic ſlaves have ever endured.* After the

* Nothing can give this country a more forcible idea of the ſituation of France, than the reſult of the ſtruggle here alluded to, between the legiſlative and executive powers of France.

Thucydides, after detailing the political diſſentions and maſſacres at Corcyra, has ſome reflections upon the civil commotions which diſtracted Greece, ſo applicable to the conteſts between the ſeveral parties in France, that I cannot forbear to quote ſome of them. The entire paſſage is too long to inſert in a note, but it is well worthy of our moſt ſerious attention. The reflections correſpond ſo exactly with the effects of the French ſyſtem, ſo far as it has extended, that we may anticipate, in the miſeries of Greece, the final conſequences of its eventual ſucceſs in Europe. The reſult to that fair and free country, after a moſt bloody conteſt in every one of her ſeveral governments, and a general war in which ſome ſtates were exterminated, was the

murder, or transportation of part of the Executive Magistracy, and of every distinguished person

the total destruction of the morals of the inhabitants, the enervation of their courage, and their final subjugation by Philip of Macedon.

Παντων δ' αυτων αιτιον, ἡ αρχη η δια πλεονεξιαν καὶ φιλοτιμιαν· εκ δ' αυτων, και ες το φιλονεικειν καθιςαμενων το προθυμον. οἱ γαρ εν ταις πολεσι προςαντες, μετ' ονοματος ἑκατεροι ευπρεπους, πληθους τε ισονομιας πολιτικης, και αριςοκρατιας σωφρονος προτιμησει, τα μεν κοινα λογῳ θεραπευοντες, αθλα εποιουντο, παντι δε τροπῳ αγωνιζομενοι αλληλων περιγιγνεσθαι, ετολμησαν τε τα δεινοτατα, επεξῃεσαν τε, τας πιμωριας ετι μειζους ου μεχρι του δικαιου και τῃ πολει ξυμφορου προτιθεντες, ες δε το ἑκατεροις που αιει ἡδονην εχον ὁριζοντες, και η μετα ψηφου αδικου καταγνωσεως, η χειρι κτωμενοι τοι κρατειν, ἑτοιμοι ησαν την αυτικα φιλονεικιαν εμτιμπλαναι. ὡςε ευσεβειᾳ μεν ουδετεροι ενομιζον, ευπρεπεια δε λογου, οἱς ξυμβαιη επιφθονως τι διαπραξασθαι, αμεινον ηκουον. τα δε μεσα των πολιτων υπ' αμφοτερων, η ὁτι ου ξυνηγωνιζοντο, η φθονῳ του περιειναι, διεφθειροντο. ὁυτω πασα ιδεα κατεςη κακοτροπιας δια τας ςασεις τῳ ἑλληνικῳ. και το ευηθες (ου το γενναιον πλειςον μετεχει) καταγελασθεν ηφανισθη· το δε αντιτεταχθαι αλληλοις τῃ γνωμῃ απιςως, επιπολυ διηνεγκεν. ου γαρ ην ὁ διαλυσων ουτε λογος εχυρος, ουτε ὁρκος φοβερος. κρεισους δε οντες απαντες λογισμῳ ες το ανελπιςον του βεβαιου μη παθειν μαλλον προεσκοπουν, η πιςευσαι εδυναντο. καὶ οἱ φαυλοτεροι γνωμην, ὡς τα πλειω περιεγιγνοντο. τῳ γαρ δεδιεναι το, τε αυτων ενδεες, καὶ το των εναντιων ξυνετον, μη λογοις τε ἡσους ωσι, καὶ εκ του πολυτροπου αυτων της γνωμης φθασωσι προεπιβουλευομενοι, τολμηρως προς τα ἐργα εχωρουν. οἱ δε καταφρονουντες κἀν προαισθεσθαι, καὶ εργω ουδεν σφας δειν λαμβανειν α γνωμῃ εξεςιν, αφρακτοι μαλλον διεφθειροντο. Thucyd. Hist. Lib. 3. sect 82 and 83.

" Avarice and ambition were the original causes of these evils, which were finally encreased by that spirit of party zeal, which is the necessary result of an emulous and constant opposition. In every State the Leaders of the respective factions dignified

ſon of the Councils; France and Peace were equally proſtrate at the feet of thoſe tyger-hearted deſpots.

The

niſied their cauſe with the moſt ſpecious and honourable appellations. Thoſe who were of the democratic intereſt, deſcribed that conſtitution, as a ſtate of civil equality, while thoſe who ſtruggled in behalf of ariſtocracy, extolled it as a government of the politic and wiſe. All ſides profeſſed in their ſpeeches to have no other views than to promote the public good. But their real object was to overcome their rivals and to make the plunder of the community a reward of ſucceſs. Influenced by ſuch motives they were inflamed with the moſt deadly animoſity againſt each other, and laboured to accompliſh their ſchemes by the moſt daring and flagitious actions. Puniſhments the moſt atrocious and cruel were mutually inflicted, not according to the rules of juſtice, and the welfare of the ſtate, but according to their own arbitrary pleaſure; for both ſides were ready to glut their animoſity either with the ſentence of an iniquitous tribunal, or by means of aſſaſſination and violence. Religion was univerſally deſpiſed, and to effect the worſt of purpoſes by the deluſion of fair, but faithleſs promiſes, was admired and applauded. Thoſe citizens who joined neither party were indiſcriminately ſlaughtered by both, either through reſentment that they had refuſed their aſſiſtance, or through envy that they were exempt from thoſe calamities which the ſeveral factions endured. Thus wickedneſs exiſted in every poſſible ſhape throughout Greece, by means of theſe civil commotions. Openneſs of mind which comprehends whatever is generous and noble was baniſhed with deriſion from ſocial intercourſe; and to countermine an antagoniſt by perfidy and diſſimulation was preferred as the most honourable road to ſucceſs. Wherever reconciliation was attempted no reliance could be placed on the ſolemnity of a promiſe or the ſacred awe of an oath. Hopeleſs of a firm and laſting concord, the parties were haraſſed in keeping perpetual

The negociators, on the part of France, were immediately changed. The demand of a total ceſſion of our conqueſts as a preliminary to negociation was deliberately renewed, and Lord Malmeſbury was deſired, if he had not ſufficeint powers to make the ſacrifice, to "RETURN IN "FOUR AND TWENTY HOURS TO HIS "COURT, TO ASK FOR THEM*." It is farther declared to our Ambaſſador, that "he "can ſee, in this determination of the Executive "Directory, nothing elſe than an intention to "haſten the moment when the negociation may "be followed up with the certainty of a ſpeedy "concluſion." It is likewiſe ſaid, that the French Miniſters have no orders to leave Liſle, thereby intimating that the return of our Ambaſſador was expected, when he ſhould have received thoſe inſtructions of which it is the ſovereign

petual guard againſt the miſchievous attempts of their ſeeming friends, whom they found it impoſſible to truſt. *In theſe conteſts the advantage was commonly obtained by the faction that was moſt weak and ſtupid! Conſcious of their own deficiencies, of the talents of their opponents, and trembling leſt they ſhould be overcome by ſuperior eloquence, or over-reached by deep laid ſtratagems, they had recourſe boldly, and at once, to arms and violence. Whiletheir antagoniſts deſpiſing their dulneſs, confident in ſuperior fore-ſight, and heſitating to affect by force, what they hoped to accompliſh by ſubtlety, were attacked unawares and eaſily deſtroyed.*

† Off Pap. p. 57, 59, et Seq.

pleaſure

pleaſure of the directory, that he ſhall be himſelf the bearer.

Is the heart of Britain ſo pale and motionleſs with fear? Is the manly ſpirit of the country ſo completely dead and gone? Are we ſo utterly loſt and abandoned to every feeling but the ſenſe of ſordid gain, that to arouſe our reſentment, I muſt proceed to comment upon our diſgrace? Muſt the nakedneſs and ſhame of the country be laid bare to drive the flagging Britons back again to a conteſt for their liberties and their lives?

The uſurpers of France urge a demand the moſt inſolent and extravagant that has ever been made upon a nation that was not wholly vanquiſhed and undone. It is brought forward, not as a condition of peace, but as a preliminary to treaty* This country is cajoled with hopes that our refuſal is acquieſced in. During a

* I am not acquainted with the determination of the Cabinet, as to ſurrendering up Ceylon, Trinidad, and the Cape of Good Hope in purchaſe of peace. It appears to me from the terms uſed in the negociation, that they had reſolved to give them up. Upon the impropriety of doing ſo, unleſs the relative ſituation of the contending countries ſhould alter conſiderably, I have a decided opinion, which I ſhall give to the public, at a proper opportunity, let who will be Miniſter. The ſagacious Mr. Nicholls regards them as paltry conqueſts!

pauſe

pauſe from diplomatic buſineſs required by the Directory, we are ſlandered in their public meſſages as authors of that delay, which is privately admitted to originate with themſelves.* A public tranſaction, between two independent nations, is uſed merely as an inſtrument to evert and ſcatter thoſe ſeeds of liberty, which ſeemed about to burſt and germinate in France. Our advances towards peace are perfidiouſly employed as means to protract the conteſt, and foment a more rancorous and deadly animoſity in the ſubjects of the Republic againſt the people of England.

When this is effected, we are caſt off with ſcorn. A torrent of inſolence, ſcoffs and inſult is pour'd down upon the ſuppliant head of this petitioning country. The original demand, which had been peremptorily refuſed, is renewed with the moſt offenſive aggravation. It omits the propoſal that an Engliſh meſſenger may bear this unconditional ſurrender on our parts, from the court of St. James's, to its repreſentative in France. Nothing leſs will ſatisfy their haughty revenge than that the Ambaſſador Plenipotentiary, of Great Britain ſhall poſt between the countries at the notice of a few hours. That the repreſentative of our ſovereign and of this

* Off. Pap. p. 43.

empire,

empire, ſhall, with his own hands, bring the liberty, honour and proſperity of his nation, bound and haltered to the feet of the French Republic, to expiate the heinous offence of preſuming to defend ourſelves. Even after treatment like this, our ambaſſador patiently renews the moſt reaſonable of all reaſonable requeſts. He begs to know from the Miniſters of France, the terms upon which ſhe will vouchſafe to grant us peace.* The propriety of this claim had been previouſly admitted on the part of the Directory. For two months they had deluded us with the hope that they were at work to ſatisfy it. Yet, even a boon which could not be refuſed to an Eaſtern Rajah is denied to us. They avow that this would not be the laſt, nor (to uſe Lord Malmeſbury's words) "perhaps the moſt humiliating conceſſion "required of us. But they will not condeſcend to diſcloſe to us thoſe conditions which thus "thunder in the index." They refuſe to give a *contre projet*, and tell us, with an inſulting ſneer, that by theſe means they facilitate peace.† The ambiguity of the expreſſions cannot diſguiſe their meaning. The real purport of

* Off. Pap. p. 56.

† The words are, "Le Lord Malmeſbury ne peut voir dans "cette determination du Directoire Excutif qu'une intention de "hater l'inſtant ou les negociations pourront etre ſuivies avec la "certitude d'une prompte concluſion." Off. Pap. p. 59.

the

the note is, that we are not yet reduced into a ſituation even to hear the conditions upon which alone they deſign to grant us peace. We are not ſufficiently broken down and ſubdued to receive the law from the *Grande Nation* as other ſtates have received it; and they will wage eternal war, or accompliſh our ruin.

Conduct ſo glaringly perfidious and overbearing, even Mr. Sheridan has refuſed to defend. He admits, " yet caſting many a lingering look " behind," that our cabinet were ſincere in the late negociations for peace; and, that it is the wiſh of the Directory to prolong the war. There are a ſpecies of intellectual beggars, however, who muſt catch up, from very need, the threadbare, caſt off fancies of their ſuperiors. Mr. Nicholls has avowed his opinion that our miniſtry were not ſincere. The poor man fumbles and grovels in the mire of party politics; and, exultingly ſhakes his muddy head in the belief, that, by rendering himſelf blind, he obſcures the ſight of his countrymen *.

Avoiding

* It is but common juſtice to Mr. Sheridan to ſay, that wherever Mr. Nicholls has picked up his reaſon for ſupporting the ancient errors of oppoſition, he cannot have got them from a gentlemen of undoubted talents. Mr. Sheridan could never have relied upon the mere choice of a Plenipotentiary as a proof of inſincerity in our cabinet. He would have drawn a diſtinction between the caſe of an Ambaſſador ſent to the court of a Sovereign where ſomething might depend upon perſonal influence, and a Plenipotentiary

Avoiding to put forward to public contemplation ſuch a thing as Mr. Nicholls, let me aſk, what genius, what eloquence, or what artifice, can obſcure from the eyes of Great Britain the implacable reſentment and dreadful projects of her rival? As pledges of her reſolution for war, we have her contemptuous inſolence upon our ſupplications for peace; her infuriate denunciations of vengeance; her pointed public proſcription of every thing that is dear and valuable to the country. We have her vigorous and immediate preparations to realize all that ſhe has threatened; and we are required to put in balance againſt theſe, the aſſertions of a few ambitious, diſap-

Plenipotentiary ſent to conclude a treaty at an hundred miles diſtance from the reſidence of the French Executive power.—Neither could Mr. Sheridan, who underſtands and writes good Engliſh, and I believe French, interpret the words "another "choice would have appeared to the Directory to augur more "favourably for the ſpeedy concluſion of peace" into a manifeſtation of perſonal diſlike to Lord Malmeſbury. He could only conſtrue it into a ſorry and indecent ſneer upon the frequent miſſion of couriers during the former negociation. We have already ſeen, from which ſide the delay that took place did in fact proceed. If we were to allow the French to chooſe a Plenipotentiary for us, they would, doubtleſs, ſelect Mr. Nicholls himſelf, inſtead of Lord Malmeſbury. It would be their intereſt to appoint a ſelf-preſuming, poſitive, paſſionate, dull, and wrong-headed man. The deep reaſonings of Citizen De Lacroix, and the ſolid diſtinctions of Citizen Treilhard, would appear to ſomewhat greater advantage in the hiſtory of their diplomatic conferences than they do at preſent.

pointed,

pointed, or fooliſh individuals *. If the overbearing haughtineſs of our enemies, if the wounded honour

* I have ſeen a pamphlet of Lord Lauderdale's, intituled "*A Letter on the preſent Meaſures of Finance*". It ſeems that the noble Author is of the ſame opinion with Mr. Nicholls. He undoubtedly ſhews conſiderable taſte and judgment in the ſelection of his partners in political meaſures. He joins Mr. Nicholls in his accuſation of Miniſters, and meekly ſhares the hiſſes of the Livery of London as a Candidate for the office of Sheriff in conjunction with Mr. Waddington. If I were to animadvert upon this pamphlet in very harſh terms, the noble Earl could have no right to complain; for few publications contain ſuch bold and unqualified epithets as his own. But ſome allowance is to be made for an active mind, in which zeal is more conſpicious than judgment; and we may forgive that ſpleen which boils and frets itſelf down in a pamphlet when it is denied all other means of vent. The noble Lord declares, "that he has never been able to diſcover "in the preſent Miniſtry any real intention to recover the bleſ-"ſings of peace". p. 7. The frequent attempts of the Miniſtry to negociate; their repeated declarations to that purpoſe; and the ſtubborn inſolence of the enemy, have no influence with the noble Author. Although Miniſters ſacrifice their perſonal quiet; although they hazard their continuance in power; although no private emolument can poſſibly reſult to them from a prolongation of war, the noble Lord "has never been able to remark any ſin-"cere inclination in them to ſhew the enemy that we wiſhed for "the concluſion of a treaty." If he has any reaſons for his aſſertions diſtinct from a love of power and place, he ought to advance them; ſince every probable motive to which we can attribute the actions of man unite to contradict him. He admits that "they have been greatly ſucceſsful in conveying to the minds of "the people of this country, that the failure of their attempt to "treat, reſted with the French, and not with them". For this he is pleaſed to aſſign a cauſe no one elſe has ventured to bring forward,

ed honour of the country, if her unexampled victories are insufficient to " screw our courage to the

forward, and of which, he hinself will be finally ashamed. His words are, " this success originates, in a great measure, from a " cause as novel in itself as disgraceful to its devisers. Hitherto " the communications laid before the public by government, on " any negociation whatever, whether successful or unsuccessful, " have been merely official. The ideas of giving *minute and* " *mutilated statements* of private conversations never did nor ever " could enter the head of any considerate statesman". p. 8. He then proceeds to observe, " that these statements naturally en- " crease the existing animosity between the two countries". p. 8. &c. The country, and the Ministry, and Lord Malmesbury, have a right to demand from the noble Earl upon what authority he makes this charge; which, if true, is an high crime and misdemeanour in the guilty. If this mutilation was wilfully committed by our Ambassador when in France, it may exculpate the cabinet; but it implicates the honour, the fidelity, and liege duty of that excellent person, who was entrusted by his sovereign to negociate for the interests of his people. If they were made by Ministers at home, it is a piece of weak, unnecessary, and dangerous forgery. The dispatches themselves must remain in the Treasury, and, upon a change of Ministry, the detection would be inevitably made. But whence is it that the noble Lord collects the fact that those conversations are mutilated and misrepresented? Can he say, that their tenor contradicts the official papers, and that these last are not alone sufficient to prove, that the negociation was broken off by France? If they correspond in substance with the written notes of the Ministers on both sides, as they most assuredly do, his Lordship must have some other sources of information. I had thought, that the noble Peer's correspondents in France had long since suffered the last punishment of their atheism, of their treason, and of their animosity against England, which can be inflicted on this side the grave. If he has filled

the ſticking place," let us look to the fate of Europe. Let us view the ſhrunk and withered ſinews

up the void which the deaths of Briſſot, and Condorcet have left in his heart, his new French friends have miſinformed him; ſince the Directory have never contradicted thoſe details given by Lord Malmeſbury, either of the firſt or laſt negociation. The country is entitled, therefore, to conſider our Ambaſſador's account of the negociation as true, at leaſt until ſome grounds are pointed out to ſhake its probability. Let me aſk then, upon what principle ſhould the truth be concealed from the people? Does the noble Earl wiſh that England ſhould be kept in the dark, upon ſubjects which it imports her ſo nearly to know, that his friends may deceive her with falſe accounts of the tranſaction, and aſcend into power by rendering us diſſatisfied with war, when peace is unattainable. But it is ſaid, that this account will encreaſe the animoſity between the countries. With reſpect to England, I deny the fact. The country is indeed wiſely and prudently determined to proſecute the war, ſince ſhe cannot terminate it with honour and with ſafety; but the King, and his Miniſters, and his people, are willing even now to forget their wrongs, and to conclude a treaty, if the ambition of France will ſtoop to it. With reſpect to France herſelf, it is utterly impoſſible that theſe ſtatements could have that effect aſcribed to them in this pamphlet. The Directory took every poſſible precaution to keep our account of the negociation ſecret from the people. They immediately ſuppreſſed what may be called the Oppoſition Newſpapers throughout the Republic; and prohibited the importation of Foreign Journals, leſt their ſubjects ſhould be made acquainted with the truth. This fact alone is amply ſufficient to prove that our ſtatement of the negociation is accurate even in the mind of the Directory itſelf.—They did not ſo much as dare to lay before the two Councils, or to publiſh in the Redacteur, the terms of peace which we tendered in the treaty delivered to their Plenipotentiaries. They did not tranſmit to them any one of the official

notes

ſinews of every country, over which the rapacious and deadly arm of this neceſſitous republic has paſſed.

The neutrality of Genoa and Venice were ſcrupulouſly obſerved, at leaſt with reſpect to the enemies of France. In return for the inaction of theſe governments which preſerved the French in Italy, they have been utterly deſtroyed upon

notes which paſſed between our Ambaſſador and theirs. It is fair to infer from thence that the official papers were conſidered by them as being alone ſufficient to prove, that the negociation was for a time delayed, and finally broken off by themſelves. They were afraid to truſt the judgment of the French upon their groſs and outrageous treatment of this country. I will leave it to the reader's own good ſenſe to draw his concluſion upon the candor and motives of the noble Author in making ſuch a raſh, miſchievous, and ill-founded aſſertion. I ſhall take notice of ſome other of his poſitions hereafter; among the reſt, I ſhall obſerve upon an aſſertion common to him and many others, viz. that the French will not make peace with Mr. Pitt and the preſent Adminiſtration. There would be ſo much abſurdity, diſgrace, and miſchief in chooſing a cabinet which is to conclude peace according to the pleaſure of France, that it cannot admit of a ſerious argument. But I ſhall cloſe this ſubject for the preſent with obſerving, that the only documents which manifeſt a predilection on the part of France for particular perſons, are ſome of the public toaſts of their government. Theſe celebrate Mr. Muir, and the diſtreſſed Patriots of Ireland and Scotland. If, therefore, we are to ſelect a cabinet ſuited to the inclinations of the Directory, it is from ſuch men we are to chooſe them; in other words, we muſt ſubmit to change our government as one of the conditions of peace.

pretexts the moſt frivolous and unjuſt. The poſſeſſions of the ſtate, and the private property of the inhabitants, have been ſeverally ſeized and ſwallowed up as the lawful ſpoils of theſe mercileſs invaders. Venice, the moſt ancient power in Europe, has been bartered to the Emperor in a ſhameleſs traffic, for a part of his dominions more immediately convenient to the aggrandizement of France.

Through the ſame fatal attachment to political quietiſm, Switzerland endured the murder of her ſubjects, the violation of her frontiers, and the demand of a tribute. But patience and ſubmiſſion conſtitute the very worſt defence againſt the attacks of an ambitious and profligate neighbour. All that ſhe has purchaſed by her endurance is, the certainty of war without the hope of an ally to ſupport her; and the proſpect of a revolution without the chance of a ſtruggle to avert it.

There is no poſſible ſhape whereby diſtinct potentates can connect or interfere with each other, in which ſome exiſting government has not dealt with France. Neutrality, negociation, treaty, alliance, ſubmiſſion, have been ſeverally tried, and with the ſame ſucceſs. The preſent ſituation and hiſtory of Europe, does not furniſh even one ſolitary inſtance in which that country

has

has reſpected her own faith or the rights of her neighbours, when they ſtood oppoſed to her plans of univerſal dominion and immediate plunder.—I have already deſcribed the reſult of neutrality in the cataſtrophes of Genoa and Venice, and in the impending fate of the Swiſs Cantons. Her inſtantaneous violation of the preliminary articles ſigned at Udina, and her preſent conduct towards the Germanic empire, in the ſeizure of Mentz, are ſufficient evidence of her utter diſregard and contempt of treaties. Or if it be neceſſary to make good the charge by other inſtances, we may point at Tuſcany, Sardinia, and the Pope. Let thoſe who in ſuppleneſs of ſpirit wiſh to appeaze her by ſubmiſſion, conſider the impriſonment of the Ambaſſador of Portugal, and the contemptuous treatment of the Miniſter from Sweden. Yet further, if theſe examples are inſufficient to cool the ardor for French alliance, let us look to her conduct towards the Dutch Provinces, and the American States. She conſiders America as an enemy, and makes prize of her ſhipping for having preſumed to exerciſe the right of an independent power in concluding a treaty with Great Britain.

But above all the reſt, Holland ſtands forth a conſpicuous and melancholy warning to the world of the dangerous infatuation of confiding in French profeſſions inſtead of truſting to the

efficacy of a manly defence. The armies of France entered the United Provinces as they entered other parts of Europe. They profeſſed peace and amity to the people, and declared that their warfare was only directed againſt the government. But the frontier had been ſcarcely ſecured, when their blood-hounds, both military and civil, were let looſe to hunt out wealth, property, and domeſtic comfort from the too credulous nation. They have compelled thoſe unhappy provinces to renounce their ancient conſtitution, and have denied them the liberty of chooſing a new one. They have forced them into a war that has annihilated their fleet, deſtroyed their trade, and deprived them of their Colonial poſſeſſions. They have taken poſſeſſion of one of their provinces, of five of their principal frontier towns, and have drained and dried up the ſources of internal induſtry, by levying moſt enormous contributions *. Such are the bleſſings which

* Upwards of 13 millions ſterling in money and goods in leſs than two years. The conduct of France towards America and Holland, is ably pointed out in a pamphlet intituled "Obſervations on the Diſpute between the United States and France, addreſſed by Robert Goodloe Harper, Eſq. a Delegate of South Carolina, to his Conſtituents". This work is well worthy of the attention of this country, as giving the opinion of an able and diſintereſted ſtranger upon the conduct of France towards Great Britain, and upon the boundleſs extent of her ambitious deſigns.

proceed

proceed from this republic under the names of freedom and alliance.

I make no doubt, my dear Sir, that the people of this country perceive, from the manner in which all our advances towards peace have been refuſed, and from the treatment which other nations have received from France, that our ſafety and proſperity can be ſecured by no other means than by a manly and reſolute proſecution of the War.

Inſtances ſoflagrant as thoſe which I have pointed out, muſt prevent us from erroneouſly eſtimating the temper and conduct of republican France, by ſuch feelings and principles as influence the ſpirit of hoſtilities among civilized nations. They muſt impreſs moſt indelibly on our minds the firm conviction of her animoſity againſt us, of her envy and dread of our commercial proſperity, of her utter contempt of the rights of all other nations. Yet, even theſe acts of perfidy and injuſtice are ſurpaſſed by one, which has occurred ſince I ſat down to write. You have anticipated me no doubt when I refer to the Directory's decree denying the uſe of their ports to any ſhip that trades to Great Britain, and enacting that the poſſeſſion of Britiſh produce or manufacture ſhall ſubject a neutral veſſel and her cargo to confiſcation as lawful prize. Under the expreſs title of

Conquerors of Europe, the Grand Nation has determined to preſcribe a new and monſtrous law to neutral ſtates. She proclaims a code to ſyſtematize her piracies by ſea, as ſhe had formerly done to regulate her robberies by land. The ordonation of this decree is a direct attack upon the property and commercial rights of every other nation. It is an attempt to extend over Europe that title to levy general contributions on neutral ſtates which ſhe has actually enforced at Hamburgh. Already has France exacted two heavy tributes from that imperial city at two different periods, to ſave her from pillage. In defiance of the rights of neutrality, and of her expreſs convention with Pruſſia, ſhe has now again ſent a commiſſioner to demand an additional payment in money, and a rigorous compliance with her recent decree.

Should Europe acquieſce in this groſs infraction of the common rights of nations, ſhe bends her neck to receive the univerſal yoke which it is the avowed determination of France to impoſe. If ſhe refuſes, it is a direct declaration of war, and the northern powers muſt take up arms to vindicate their independence. England as the firſt commercial nation in Europe, could not ſubmit to this decree if it had been levelled at any other ſtate. But aimed as it is, to draw the life-blood of our greatneſs, it muſt teach us the true value

of

of French profeſſions, of fraternity, philanthrophy, and a love of peace. It marks the real object for which we have to contend againſt France. It is not for Trinidad nor Tricomale as the New Whigs pretend, but for the very ſource of all our proſperity and wealth. It is the commerce of Europe, of which they labour to deprive us. It is for the honourable opulence of our merchants, for the ſupport of our people, for the very bread of induſtry which this audacious and graſping Republic would daſh down from the Hands of the poor and of their families, that we are forced to continue the war.

Ought it to be felt as a doubt among an enlightened people whether they ſhall contribute a portion of their property to ſecure the reſt. To preſerve what is ten thouſand times more precious to us than riches,---the independence of the country, the continuance of ſocial order, and of domeſtic tranquility.

The great body of the people, both in the capital and in the country, acquieſce in the neceſſity of raiſing large ſupplies to maintain the war. The plan, however, which has been ſuggeſted for the purpoſe has not been ſo generally approved of. Many pariſhes in the metropolis, have condemned, by expreſs reſolutions, the new ſcheme

of

of taxation propoſed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and recently ſanctioned by Parliament. Some of the objections which have been thus made, were bottomed in a total miſconception of the objects and proviſions of the bill. Others have been ultimately removed by thoſe modifications which it received as it paſſed through the committee, at a period long ſubſequent to theſe meetings.

The New Whigs, however, have tried to raiſe the public indignation againſt the meaſure by the harſheſt, and moſt opprobrious denunciation of its principle. The Earl of Lauderdale, alſo, has honoured a pamphlet with his name to expoſe its impolicy and wickedneſs. It is ſomewhat in vindication of the noble writer that few of the ſentiments which are to be found in his work originate with himſelf.* He has merely lent his pen, to record the objections of his party, and there is little in the tract which has not appeared in the newſpaper reports of oppoſition ſpeeches, and in the reſolutions of a meeting of Citizens at the Crown and Anchor. Regarding the objec-

* I ſhall ſay nothing of the ſcurrilous terms which his Lordſhip has applied to Mr. Pitt, as I am perſuaded that, upon more mature reflection, he will wiſh to have omitted them. A man of real talents ſcorns to rake the kennel for that common filth, which the fury of every vulgar hand can fling with equal adroitneſs. A magnanimous enemy diſdains to have recourſe to weapons which his adverſary cannot deſcend to handle.

pen

tions, therefore, which are ſtated by his Lordſhip, as thoſe upon which his party rely, I ſhall examine them briefly.

He ſtates that the bill contains two principles.

1ſt. " It aſſerts that raiſing part of the ſupplies " of the year by an aſſeſſment on property, is pre- " ferable to the means which this country has " uniformly practiſed.

2nd. " It maintains that the Aſſeſſed Taxes " form the beſt evidence of property, and afford, " of courſe, the beſt criterion for impoſing ſuch " an aſſeſſment,"

I ſhall proceed to examine the reaſoning of the noble Author on both theſe points.

In objecting to this plan. as a mode of raiſing the ſupplies, he urges, that ſuppoſing the ſyſtem of funding, to be wrong, yet that we ought to perſevere in it, with the view of " convincing the " enemy of our means*." His Lordſhip is as ready here to aſſume, for the convenience of his argument, that the French may be deceived by ſuch an artifice, as he was, a few pages before, to aſſert their accurate knowledge of our diſtreſſed ſituation†. But I omit to dwell upon this ſeeming

* P. 20. † P. 14.

inconſiſtency

inconſiſtency, or to enquire whether we might not purchaſe this opinion of our reſources at too high a price. It will be ſufficient to examine the main ground of the argument.

He agrees with Mr. Pitt, that it is wiſe to impreſs the enemy with an idea of the great extent of our ability to carry on the war in our method of raiſing the ſupply. So ſenſible is he of the uſefulneſs of doing ſo, that he adviſes the attempt though it were to be attended with a pecuniary loſs to the country. His Lordſhip differs only as to the means which will produce the effect. He has not pointed out what circumſtances he conceives peculiar to the ſyſtem of funding, which muſt implant this idea of our incalculable opulence in the minds either of foreigners or natives. So far as I can conſider the queſtion, the preſent ſcheme of taxation ſeems preferable, upon this very account to that which is patroniſed by his Lordſhip, ſince it poſſeſſes, in a more eminent degree, every quality which can inſpire ſuch an opinion in a reflecting mind.

Theſe are, the magnitude of the ſupply to be raiſed; the facility with which it is raiſed; and the ability and willingneſs of the people to repay it. The quantum of the ſupply is exactly the ſame, to whichever ſyſtem we reſort. The facility of borrowing ſuch parts of it, as muſt

muſt be borrowed, cannot be dimiſhed but it may be encreaſed by this plan. This must naturally happen, inaſmuch as the proſpect of payment is more ſpeedy. Lastly, the ability and willingneſs of the people to repay is thus rendered more manifeſt ſince they undertake to raiſe a third of the ſupply within the year, and to diſcharge the whole of what is borrowed in leſs than three.

His Lordſhip's next objection is, that, ſuppoſing the preſent ſyſtem of taxation to be the beſt, it ſhould have been adopted before, upwards of 200,000,000l. had been added to our debt*.

When the noble Earl makes this obſervation, he ſeems to forget the maxim of the poet, which is worn trite, from its frequent and uſeful application to the œconomy of life.

Eſt modus in rebus; ſunt certi denique fines
Quos ultra, citraque nequit conſiſtere rectum

So far as Mr. Pitt has raiſed the ſupplies upon the ſyſtem of funding, his conduct muſt be approved by Lord Lauderdale, ſince he recommends the meaſure to his country now. But it does not follow, by any means, that reaſons may not, and do not exiſt, which would render it

* P. 19.

highly

highly pernicious to purſue the ſame financial plans during the preſent criſis, which it was wiſe and ſalutary to adopt at the former period. In conſequence of the very exorbitant terms upon which government muſt borrow, at preſent, the following detrimental conſequences would reſult from the immediate funding of a conſiderable loan, in compliance with his Lordſhip's advice, 1ſt. The high intereſt given by government would render it extremely difficult, if not impoſſible, for the industrious merchant and manufacturer to borrow money to ſupport their trade. 2nd. To add to the quantity of public ſtock, would neceſſarily depreciate its value, and this muſt operate as a very heavy tax upon transfers, without being of any ſervice to the ſtate. 3d. The terms upon which a large loan could be made at preſent, are ſo very diſadvantageous to the country, that the exiſting inhabitants who conſtitute the community, would pay the whole ſum borrowed, three times over during their lives in permanent taxes, and ſtill leave their poſterity encumbered with the debt.

Whether the noble Author has weighed theſe objections or not, he declares it to be "his decided opinion that funding is the beſt and moſt prudent means of defraying the extended expences of modern warfare," (p. 20.*) When he forms this

* His Lordſhip has ſupported his preference of the funded ſyſtem with conſiderable ingenuity. He condenſes the whole of his argument

this opinion, he muſt differ at leaſt from his friend Mr. Fox, who ſuppoſes that our national debt is the beſt ally of France. I ſay this, becauſe, notwithſtanding the republican toaſts which diſtinguiſhed the laſt commemoration of Mr. Fox's birth-day, at the Crown and Anchor, I hope that it is wholly impoſſible that his Lordſhip could ſupport a ſyſtem, whoſe operation muſt be favourable to our enemy.

Having thus condemned the plan of raiſing part of the ſupplies within the year, by a comparative preference given to the funded ſyſtem, his Lordſhip proceeds to attack the meaſure more directly in the following argument. He ſtates it to be the wiſh of the Miniſter, to ſecure by his plan, a tenth of the income of individuals. That,

argument in the two following propoſitions, 1ſt. "That money raiſed by aſſuming a proportion of the property of all, muſt occaſion a greater loſs to every country, than a ſum of a ſimilar extent borrowed by voluntary ſubſcription, except we can find a Nation where the whole property is ſo employed as to produce equally", 2nd. "That the meaſure of that loſs muſt be a per centage on the ſum borrowed equal to the produce of the leaſt productive part of the property and the avarage produce of the whole," (p. 22) If the whole ſum required by government from the people were to be taken in one day, his Lordſhips obſervation would be true to a conſiderable extent. But when the ſum is to be taken gradually, as it is by the preſent act of parliament, it will, in truth, come from that part of the national capital which is leaſt productive, juſt as it wonld in the caſe of a voluntary loan. The only difference is that private individuals become borrowers from the leaſt productive part of national capital, inſtead of Government.

if

if he ſucceeds, he muſt of courſe, diminiſh the national expenditure in a proportional degree. Thus, ſays the noble author, if the revenue depending upon conſumption, is 17,400,000l. by diminiſhing the income of the people, you will ſtrike off a tenth of the expenditure, or 1,740,000l. which is an extravagant premium for raiſing 7,000,000l.*

Taking it for granted that the noble author has rightly ſtated the object of the bill, this argument is a little at variance with his aſſertion, that "the Aſſeſſed Taxes do not afford any "evidence of real expenditure†," and his farther declaration, that "the midling claſſes of "merchants and manufacturers, have very ge-"nerally outlived their incomes‡." I am perſuaded that his Lordſhip muſt give entire credit to this laſt aſſertion, or he would not have made it. It is not a very venial treſpaſs in a man of birth and faſhion, to exceed his fortune, although he may hope to diſcharge his debts by a ſudden vault into ſome lucrative office. But, for that induſtrious claſs, againſt whom the charge is now made, notoriouſly to exceed their income, is ſuch ſcandalous and diſgraceful conduct, that no perſon who aſpires to become a demi-ſheriff of London and Mid-

* P. 21. † P. 25, 26. ‡ P. 36.

dleſex;

dleſex, would utter the remark, if it had not been wrenched from him in a firm conviction of its truth. Undoubtedly, the ſtatement is as unjuſt as it is injurious. But the point is to be ſettled between the "middling claſſes of mer-"chants and manufacturers," and his Lordſhip. I have only to obſerve, in anſwer to this argument, 1ſt. That in caſes where people exceed their income, a diminution of that income does not, of neceſſity, cauſe a proportionate diminution of expenditure, 2d. That if the aſſeſſed taxes are no evidence of national expenditure, the direct ratio of their augmentation, cannot aſcertain the proportion of its conſequential decreaſe.

It is not ſufficient however, to point out the inconſiſtency of this argument, with ſome of his Lordſhip's other poſitions. He relies upon it in moſt of his reaſonings againſt the bill, and it is but candid to diſcuſs its intrinſic value.

It is defective upon no leſs than three grounds. 1ſt. It is not proved that this preſſure can not operate, as every other onerous tax has operated in England, namely, to give ſuch a ſtimulus to ingenuity and induſtry, as will cauſe the income of individuals to increaſe in a proportion ſufficient to anſwer their increaſing burthens. 2d. Although this ſhould be impracti-

cable, yet as the tax falls upon the rich, it ſhould be ſhewn that it is not to be deducted from the annual increaſe of national capital, but that it muſt neceſſarily produce a retrenchment in general expenditure*. 3d. The ſtatement upon which his Lordſhip forms his deduction, is altogether erroneous. He grounds his argument upon the ſuppoſition, that a tenth of the whole national income will be taken away, and that the national expenditure muſt conſequently be reduced in the ſame proportion.

But it is by no means the fact that every man is to be taxed in the proportion of a tenth of his income, although it is provided that his taxes ſhall never exceed it. The lower claſſes of the community, and the direct taxes upon property, are altogether exempted from the increaſe. Thoſe who are ſubject to it, are aſſeſſed in an augmenting ſcale, proportioned to their preſent payments. If, therefore, the principle

* In a poor country, riſing rapidly in population, there is no part of its capital which is unemployed. But in a rich country, where population is rather ſtationary than progreſſive, there is a great ſum of capital which is not beneficially employed. Larger floating capitals are kept by many individuals to anſwer the demands of trade, than is required for its actual extent. Anyone, who has had occaſion to ſee how trade is carried on in the different ends of this iſland, knows that much leſs floating capital is found requiſite in Scotland than is deemed neceſſary in England in proportion to the actual capital employed in trade.

were

were conceded to the noble Earl, that a proportional diminution of our revenues, ariſing from expenditure, muſt reſult from this additional tax, ſtill his eſtimate of the conſequent annual deficiency would be groſsly exceſſive. For as much leſs than a tenth of the income is aſſumed, the expenditure cannot be diminiſhed in the proportion of a tenth. There exiſts, therefore, but little chance, that thoſe habits of abſtinence will take place, which are ſo gravely deplored and deprecated by the Right Honourable Financier, as a dangerous evil.

If any practice of the temperate virtues could give them the ſalutary controul of cuſtoms over the nation, in the ſhort period of "two years "and a quarter," it would be a cheap purchaſe to the country, although the amount of the tax ſhould be ſcattered to the winds. He is but a vulgar Stateſman, who regards the people as a mere inſtrument to reproduce capital, and to ſubmit to taxation. There are other circumſtances, upon which the energy, the ſtrength, the freedom and the happineſs of a country muſt depend. The hardihood of a laborious life, the frugal temperance of manners, the manly ſenſe of independence, may be rotted away by luxury, and they are not to be compenſated by revenue. If England does not now poſſeſs the noble firmneſs to ſacrifice her luxuries, in order to pre-

ſerve her independence, the baſis of her proſperity is ſapped and deſtroyed. We are reduced to that very ſtate with which Mr. Sheridan inſulted the nation when he aſſerted that our luxury left no compariſon between the inhabitants of England and Rome.

The noble Lord next attacks what he calls the ſecond principle of the bill, viz. "that the "aſſeſſed taxes form the beſt evidence of pro- "perty, and are of courſe the beſt criterion for "collecting an aliquot part of men's eſtates*." He aſſerts, that to ſupport this principle, three poſitions muſt be maintained. 1ſt. That the Aſſeſſed Taxes form a criterion of real expenditure. 2d. That expenditure is a criterion of income. 3d. That income affords a juſt criterion of property†.

I ſhall examine theſe poſitions briefly, becauſe, in truth, it is not neceſſary to maintain any one of them, to juſtify the principle of the bill.

The firſt poſition which is controverted by the noble author, has no reference to the bill when it is conſidered as a general principle without any limitation. The error of ſuch reaſoning,

* P. 24. † P. 25.

becomes

becomes immediately apparent, as ſoon as it is obſerved that the chief inſtances by which he demonſtrates the fallacy of the propoſition, are exceptions provided for by the ſtatute itſelf. His Lordſhip is right when he remarks, that houſes and horſes are not mere objects of idle conſumption. They may either be uſed and occupied as objects of voluntary expence, or as the inſtruments and means of profit and livelihood. But when the bill expreſsly preſerves theſe articles from the general operation of the principle, by an anxious and ſpecific proviſion, it is neither fair nor candid in the noble author, to cite thoſe very inconveniences which the bill excepts againſt, as proofs of its abſurdity and injuſtice. Here I cannot help remarking, that the noble financier ſeems not even to have conſidered the nature and extent of thoſe Aſſeſſed Taxes, which form the ſubject matter upon which this act is to operate. The Printing houſe of his Lordſhip's Printer, is the moſt unfortunate illuſtration of his argument, that he could poſſibly produce. If the Stateſman had looked into the ſtatute book, inſtead of aſſerting that the aſſeſſed taxes "formed no inconſiderable "deduction from his Printer's profits," he would have learned, that a building ſo occupied, was altogether exempted from the houſe and window duty.

If his Lordſhip's oppoſition to his own remaining propoſitions is allowed to be juſt, it will not advance his attack upon the meaſure itſelf. Though expenditure ſhould not be the criterion of income, nor income of capital, this is no good reaſon to condemn a ſyſtem, in which the tax is not levied upon the incomings of the payer. The real object of the preſent tax is, that a part of the means of the wealthy, proportioned to what they expend in idle conſumption, ſhould be applied to the exigencies of the ſtate. Income is not the ſubject of the tax; it is only a means to prevent its partial exceſs. The gains of the poor, and the return of capital, employed ſolely in commerce, are exempted altogether. Where a man's productive income falls ſhort of 200l. per annum, he cannot pay more than, in a preſcribed ſcale of proportions, much below a tenth of the whole. When it riſes above 200l. the ſtatute provides, that the tax ſhall never exceed the proportion of a tenth, but whether the individual is to pay up to that amount, is regulated, in either caſe by the ſum of his aſſeſſed expenditure.

The inſtance, therefore, which is propoſed by the noble Author, to prove the groſs impropriety and hardſhips of this act, namely, that the incomes of a landed gentleman of 1000l. per annum, and that of a merchant, which is of equal amount,

amount, are taxed by it to a ſimilar extent, muſt rarely occur. According to the common courſe of œconomy, individuals do not expend in idle conſumption, ſums proportioned to their income, but to the whole of their capital. When a gentleman, therefore, owns an eſtate of 1000l. a year, he may expend that entire ſum in his houſe, his horſes, and his dogs. But the merchant whoſe trade, yields him an income to an equal amount, is ſenſible of its precarious duration. He does not expend one half of it in articles which are liable to Aſſeſſed Taxes. He ſaves as much as he can, and traffics with all he can ſave. It undoubtedly may, and will happen, that this tax muſt fall unequally, when a man regulates his expenditure by his income, inſtead of his capital. But no ſcheme of taxation has ever been deviſed, which does not fall with partial heavineſs upon particular perſons. Thoſe who exceed their revenue, and thoſe who live up to it, when it is of a temporary nature, are not intitled to particular care from the ſtate. The former is injuſtice to a man's family, and a fraud upon his creditors; the latter may be exempt from the ſecond imputation, but is equally liable to the firſt. No government is to protect and favor extravagance by its fiſcal proviſions, and if the preſent law is ſo far ſumptuary, as to prevent or puniſh theſe miſchiefs, it will produce a moſt beneficial effect.

The noble Earl having thus unequivocally condemned the object and principle of the law, proceeds to arraign ſome of its particular regulations.

His firſt ground of complaint, is, that it has a retroſpect.*

The time from which the ſtatute begins to operate, was fixed at a date ſo very little prior to that of its paſſing, that it hardly deſerves to be noticed. I own, indeed, that the moſt ſpecious objection which has been made againſt the bill, is, that it deprives the people of the cuſtomary option, to avoid the tax, by diſcontinuing expenditure. This proviſion, however, is in perfect conſiſtence with the principle of the bill. Individuals are to contribtute in proportion to their means—and their Aſſeſſed Taxes are the meaſure of their contribution. If the proviſion had not been adopted, the tax would have been levied, not in proportion to the ability of the payers, but accordiug to their ſeveral diſpoſitions. Many perſons would have diſcontinued their equipage from parſimony. Others would have ſought conſolation for a ſacrifice of their immediate comforts, in the little triumph of having diſappointed and diſ-

* P. 31.

treſſed

treſſed the Miniſter. The proviſion cannot be generally burthenſome, ſince thoſe who put down their horſes, carriages or ſervants, muſt ſave more than the amount of the tax, by this diminution of their expenditure. If the capacity of the party has decreaſed yet further, it is in his power to exonerate himſelf by declaration and oath, that the aſſeſſment exceeds a tenth of his income.

His Lordſhip, however impugns this mode of relief upon moral and religious conſiderations, and urges that it may promote perjury and every ſpecies of immorality*. This remark is accompanied with a ſneer againſt the truly reſpectable and virtuous member for Yorkſhire, ſo obvious, that I cannot ſuppoſe the noble Lord is more ſerious in the obſervation than Mr. Sheridan, by whom it is was originally made, with its preſent point. If theſe grave and auſtere guardians of religion; if theſe new Catos, do really conſider the public morals, as endangered by the temptation held out in the conſequences of this oath, let them proceed more fundamentally and ſyſtematically to work. They muſt, in the ſame ſpirit, put down all oaths at the Cuſtom-houſe. They muſt reform all proceedings in Courts of excleſiaſtical, equitable,

* P. 33.

and

and even criminal juriſdiction. In every one of theſe judicial tribunals, an oath is taken to redreſs the wrongs, or recover the rights of the perſon who takes it. When our pious cenſors have ſurveyed this wide extent of their projected reformation, they will perceive that to enforce a beneficial regulation by an oath, is neither irreligious nor immoral, provided it cannot be effected ſo completely by any other means.

A more ſerious objection, which has been urged againſt it is, that "it forces a poſitive "diſcloſure of the ſtate of the affairs of thoſe "who chooſe to benefit by it*." It is, in the language of the noble Lord, a public "pro-"clamation to the world of a man's folly, or his "calamity; and, in both caſes, the downfal of "his credit muſt enſue."

It was impoſſible, my dear Sir, to forbear a ſmile at peruſing this objection, which originated in the parochial reſolutions of a great commercial city. A minute diſcloſure of a merchant's affairs, at ſome particular juncture, when moſt of his means are in ſuppoſition, would no doubt affect his credit. An inquiſitorial ſcrutiny into private books and funds, would at all times prove detrimental to commerce, and deſtructive to liberty. But it does not ſeem ſo eaſy to point out in

* P. 34.

what

what manner a fair diſcloſure, by the individual himſelf, of his annual average income, for three ſucceſſive years, can deprive a commercial man of any credit, to which he is juſtly entitled from his ability to diſcharge his engagements.

If one of our Bond-ſtreet acquaintance, were to continue his curricle and ſplendid retinue, in order to maintain his credit after his eſtate was gone, his coachmaker, his taylor and the remaining victims to this deluſive appearance, would regard it as a ſwindling trick. They would do ſo with great juſtice, whether he had loſt his eſtate from folly or misfortune; by a throw of the dice, or a defect in his title.

In what reſpect does the inſtance which I have put, differ from that which a conclave of ſhopkeepers, in their pariſh veſtry, conceive to be ſuch a valuable city privilege, that they publicly impeach a bill which gives a collateral check to the practice? The noble Lord applies ſtrongly to the human feelings, when he puts the caſe of an individual, reduced in his means by misfortune. But it has not hitherto been contended, either in the moral or political forum, that misfortune can juſtify any man in aſſuming the falſe appearance of wealth, to obtain a degree of credit which his actual property is unable to ſupport,

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His Lordſhip, however, labours much more ſedulouſly to defend the caſe of merchants, who exceed their income from their perſonal folly. He repreſents it as a very general evil, and aſſerts that the middling claſs of merchants and manufacturers, "ſtruggling to ſupport their credit, "have very generally outlived their income*." If the fact be ſo, what can reſult from ſuch conduct, but bankruptcy? Is the perſon who plunges deeper into extravagance from day to day, likely to benefit his creditors by a farther extenſion of his credit? Is it not better that ſuch a man ſhould endure the natural fruits of his folly, than that his honeſt and induſtrious neighbours, who live within their income, (which I will venture to ſay, are 99 out of 100 of the mercantile and manufacturing claſſes of this country) ſhould become ſufferers from a credit that is obtained by deceit.

The only remaining objection which is made in this Pamphlet, ſtrikes at the profeſſed principle of the meaſure. His Lordſhip contends, that it does not exempt the poor from aſſeſſment—that, on the contrary, they "will be at "leaſt common ſufferers with others, and pro-"bably greater ſufferers, than the claſſes whoſe "aſſeſſments are augmented†."

* P. 35. † P. 36.

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If this argument has any weight, it goes to prove that no part of the ſupplies ſhould be raiſed within the year by taxation, as the burthen muſt ultimately fall upon the poor. It muſt proceed this length, becauſe it never can be contended, that when the ſame amount of taxes are laid excluſively upon the rich, they will fall heavier upon the poor than if they had been directly impoſed upon both. The reaſoning upon which his Lordſhip founds this concluſion is, the ſame which he had urged before, to prove it a moſt extravagant ſyſtem of raiſing the ſupply. He contends, that the tax muſt cauſe a reduction of expenditure among the rich, to an equal amount, and, by conſequence, a ſimilar deduction from the earnings of the poor. I have already ſhewn the fallacy of ſuppoſing that the conſumption of the rich, will be diminiſhed by any thing like the total produce of the tax. But if the ſuppoſition were juſt, it would not follow that the earnings of the poor would be reduced in the ſlighteſt degree. Whether the ſum remains in the pockets of the rich, or paſſes into the hands of government, it does no more than change the perſon who diſtributes it, and is ultimately laid out among the people. Such a change is to a certain extent, beneficial to the nation. It would be given, by the wealthy in general, to coach-makers, taylors, ſervants, jewellers, picture-mongers, and toy-men. It is tranſferred by government, to ſhipwrights, rope-

makers,

makers, breeders of cattle, growers of corn, and to the labouring poor; claſſes of the community whom it is of much greater importance to the country to cheriſh and ſupport, than thoſe who profit by it in the other alternative.

I am extremely ſorry to hear it ſo vehemently preſſed by his Lordſhip, that the conſequences of the ſtatute will fall moſt heavily upon the middling claſs of merchants and manufacturers, and upon the labouring poor. The obſervations are utterly repugnant to fact, and it requires a conſiderable portion of charity to believe that the author can be ignorant of their obvious tendency to excite general diſcontent, at a period when the efforts of every honeſt man ſhould be employed to calm the popular mind. But although, I may acquit the noble Lord of any deſign to produce, by miſrepreſentation, a conſequence thus wicked and abominable, I muſt aſſert, that his pamphlet can have no other effect. His Lordſhip is in poſſeſſion of conſiderable talents, and private virtues. Perhaps the firſt are more congenial to any other ſpecies of political diſquiſition, than that of detailed and ſober calculation which he has choſen for himſelf. Certainly the laſt can receive no conſolation if the film of party zeal ſhould ever become purged from his eyes, in reflecting that the falſe concluſions which he labours to eſtabliſh, might raiſe the

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moſt dangerous claſſes of ſociety in rebellion, againſt a meaſure deſigned for their peculiar happineſs and protection.

In a ſcheme of taxation ſo new and extenſive, ſome imperfections muſt undoubtedly occur. Particular caſes of hardſhip, which contradict the general principle and deſign of the meaſure, may poſſibly be picked out by perſevering malignity. But as time and experience reveal any latent inconvenience, the wiſdom of the legiſlature will provide a remedy. In moſt inſtances, the ſame experience will evince the folly of thoſe objections which factious and ſelf-intereſted clamour has raiſed againſt it. Conſidering the general principle, and cautious proviſions of the Bill, I do not heſitate to pronounce it the moſt ſplendid inſtance of the integrity and fiſcal ſkill of that Miniſter, to whoſe talents for finance the recent proſperity of the empire is an everlaſting monument. He has boldly met the perils of our ſituation, and wiſely extracted from our danger the means of our ſafety. He has nobly diſdained to riſk the glory of the country, and the happineſs of poſterity, in a ſelfiſh fear that his perſonal popularity may be obſcured for a ſeaſon. Nor is the meaſure leſs glorious to the great body of the people of Great Britain. The higher claſſes willingly ſubmit to diſcharge this heavy contribution; moſt aſſuredly not leſs for the ſafe-

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ty and happineſs of the poor, than for their own ſecurity. It is a cheering proof, that neither our antient good ſenſe, nor patriotiſm, nor love of genuine freedom, have entirely diſappeared.—That people are truly and alone worthy of an honourable peace, who can patiently bear thoſe burthens, and hardſhips, and dangers which are neceſſary to procure it.

You are well aware, my dear Sir, that if ſuch a peace could be obtained, it muſt be ſought for moſt earneſtly by his Majeſty's Miniſters. They can reap little elſe, from a continuance of hoſtilities, than an increaſe of anxiety and care. If private gain be an object with any Member of the Cabinet, war, which hazards his place, adds nothing to his immediate emolument. In the hour of victory, they only ſhare that exultation which every Engliſhman feels in the triumphant valour of his countrymen. In the day of diſappointment and defeat, the whole burthen of national diſpleaſure falls excluſively upon them. Every circumſtance and accident which thwarts the public hope, is imputed to their want of judgment or of honeſty. The diſcomfiture of foreign armies, the defection of allies, the general puſillanimity of Europe, the weight of taxes, the very misfortunes and inclemency of ſeaſon are laid upon our Miniſters, as matters of accuſation, and grounds of diſgrace. No man of a wiſe and honourable or prudent

mind

mind could endure ſuch unmerited odium for a ſordid accumulation of riches, by a wanton prolongation of war. But it would be abſolute madneſs if he were to plunge himſelf, as our Cabinet muſt do, into ſuch difficulties, for the ſole purpoſe of enriching contractors and clerks, who are not ſo much as known to him by name.

If it be impoſſible to attribute the continuance of hoſtilities to any perſonal motives on the part of Miniſtry, it is equally idle to ſuppoſe, that the averſion of France to peace is founded on a particular enmity to the exiſting Cabinet. You will, I am ſure, agree with me, that no meaſure can be more dangerous to our independence, than to ſuffer a foreign power to intermeddle with our domeſtic parties. If France does conſider one ſet of Miniſters as her particular enemies, ſhe muſt regard another as the tool and inſtrument of her aggrandiſement. It appears to me, that the chief deſign of the New Whigs in their preſent conduct, is to elicit ſuch a declaration from the Republic*.

But

* I allude in particular to the ſentiments publicly toaſted at the recent celebration of Mr. Fox's birth-day. One of them, as it is given in the Morning Chronicle, is little, if at all, ſhort of being treaſonable. What can the country think of men who labour, at the preſent period, to impreſs upon the public mind, feelings which muſt deſtroy the only means of reſiſting an implacable enemy. It is not the firſt time in which degenerate Engliſhmen have made a voluntary ſacrifice of the intereſts of

their

But until that is accompliſhed, it might be ſufficient to obſerve, in anſwer to this aſſertion which is now circulated with conſiderable induſtry, that France has never intimated ſuch an opinion, or refuſed to treat with his Majeſty's preſent ſervants. It would be wrong to ſacrifice, at any time, our faithful friends to the unreaſonable inclinations of an enemy. It would be equally diſgraceful and impolitic, to permit one ſo reſtleſs as the republic to nominate an adminiſtration for this imperial kingdom. But we ſhould act infinitely worſe, if we were to anticipate wiſhes, which our foe has no right to entertain, and to commit injuſtice which ſhe has not required.

I ſhall go further, and deny both the fact and the concluſion which is deduced from it. The moſt barbarous ages cannot ſupply one inſtance of perſonal animoſity between the Executive Officers of different nations, unleſs it has been founded on perſonal injury. If the ſelfiſh pride and paſſions of men have not been rouſed by ſuch means, Miniſters are only viewed as a part of the people whoſe affairs they conduct, and it is the ſeveral countries which become reciprocal objects of friendſhip or averſion. The

their country to gratify their deſperate ambition. The conſtitution has ſurvived their attacks, and they have periſhed in exile or upon the ſcaffold. Let thoſe who imitate their example profit by the leſſon of their ill ſucceſs.

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ſilence of the French Executive is a concluſive proof, that upon this ſubject their feelings are not different from thoſe of other Stateſmen. They have not forborne through delicacy either to aſperſe our Government, or the conduct of our Ambaſſador. Is it probable that they would have ſhewn more reſpect to the Cabinet if they had been influenced by ſuch perſonal antipathy. Let meaſk, alſo, what cauſes can exiſt to excite this implacable reſentment independent of a faithful attention to the intereſts of this country? Can that be a reaſon to induce the people of Great Britain to withdraw their confidence.

When the Directory talk of the corruption of Engliſh Gold and our recent endeavours to foment conſpiracies among them, they laugh at the credulity of their own ſubjects. It is a charge brought with the ſame views, and founded on the ſame groſs violation of truth as their wicked proclamations to the French people of our cruelty to priſoners. Suppoſing the Republic the moſt corrupt and impoveriſhed nation upon earth, the whole annual ſupplies of England would be inſufficient to effect the miſchiefs attributed to our guineas.

Even if the Directory did feel any perſonal diſlike to our Miniſtry, from whence does it appear that it would have any influence upon the con-

cluſion of peace. If the French have taken up this dangerous ſyſtem of favoritiſm and alliance with the adminiſtration of a country inſtead of its Government, they muſt have ſhewn it either in the hard terms of peace impoſed upon ſovereignties, whoſe Miniſters were conſidered as hoſtile to their liberties, or in liberal conceſſions where they were regarded as friends. France is ſaid to aſcribe all her miſeries to the treaty of Pilnitz. If this treaty did really exiſt, it was entered into between Pruſſia and the Emperor, without the concurrence or knowledge of our Cabinet *. Yet France has concluded treaties with both theſe Sovereigns without any change of their Miniſters. If I remember rightly the Prime Miniſter of Naples was publicly denounced in the National Aſſembly as dangerous from his being an Engliſhman. Yet the conditions of peace granted to Naples were not ſo ignominious as thoſe impoſed upon Spain. On the other hand, the Directory have not abated a ſingle jot of their moſt extravagant pretenſions in favour of Miniſters, who were profeſſedly their friends. They have violated the neutrality, and raiſed contributions in Tuſcany notwithſtanding their veneration for the Philoſophic Jacobin Carletti. They have ſtrangled the new-born Republic of Venice, in contempt of their pious affection for

* Off. Pap. p. 34, 35.

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the traitor Dandolo. Will the Republic now ſpare the Reverend Court of Rome from the pollution of blood, in pity to the friendſhip of her ambaſſador with Cardinal Doria Pamphili? Will ſhe protect the eccleſiaſtical ſtates from violence, the country from plunder, and the Government from annihilation, in her tender ſympathy with the congenial principles of Cardinal Buon Campagna.

But I am aſhamed to waſte further time in refuting ſuch an idle opinion. It is not propagated from conviction, but in the hope that it will be received without examination, into ſuch minds as may be miſled by an anxious deſire of peace.

The animoſity of France, is to be traced to a very different, but much more rational ſource. It is to be found in the deſigns of her rulers, and the genius of her people. The faults which characterized the nation under a Monarchy, are augmented ſince it has become a Republic. Frenchmen have more vanity, more confidence in their own powers, and manifeſt a more extravagant affectation of national ſuperiority, than ever. Unexpected victories have made them drunk with arrogance and ambition. They aſpire to the unqualified dominion of Europe, and are conſoled under all their calamities, by the hopes

of attaining it. In their purſuit of liberty, they have found nothing more than the name, and they ſeek to mitigate the wretchedneſs of a military deſpotiſm, under the empty title of the Grand Nation. It is impoſſible not to diſcover in this trait, the ſame vain-glorious ſpirit, which gave to their ſovereign, in the laſt century, his appellation of the Grand Monarque; the ſame inſolence of ambition, which at that time rouſed all Europe, with England at its head, to chaſtiſe and repreſs it.

The various ſwarms of domeſtic tyrants, which have infeſted France ever ſince the Revolution, have fed and faſtened upon this weakneſs of their countrymen, with inſtinctive conſiſtency. The ſame principles which preſcribed the Rhine and Alps, as the natural boundaries of France in the National Convention, dictate a general plan of ſubjugation to the preſent directory. They are not merely ſtimulated to attempt it, by the inſatiable appetite for conqueſt, and the imperious neceſſity for plunder. They urge it in their eager ſolicitude for life, as the indiſpenſible ſtay of their domeſtic Government, and the only means to inſure their perſonal ſafety. The popularity of conqueſt, and the dread of the army, are the great cauſes of tranquillity in France. Peace, in removing the terror of coercion and a common object of deſire from this reſtleſs and volatile

people,

people, would give riſe to civil diſturbances infinitely more deſtructive than a foreign war.

While the French Republic purſue the ſame plan that has been followed by every other powerful Republic, and aim at foreign conqueſts to preſerve domeſtic tranquility, they are prompted by many reaſons to direct their attack againſt Great Britain. Our great wealth encourages their Government with the hope of recruiting their reſources; and our ſolicitude for peace has taught them to deſpiſe our military ſpirit. Regarding us as the natural guardians of the balance of Europe, they do not conſider their preſent conqueſts as ſafe, unleſs they can ruin our commerce, and break to pieces our ſpirit and our pride. They are certain, that until they have effected it, they can neither deſtroy the peace of Northern Europe, nor diſturb the tranquility of America.

To the powerful motives of political intereſt, we muſt add the inflamed and rancorous enmity of an unſucceſsful rival. While they have been victorious over all their other enemies, they have been foiled and diſgraced in every conflict with the forces of this country. They have ſtood forth the emulous competitors of all our purſuits, and have proved unſucceſsful in all. It was the favorite object of their Government, ever ſince

the time of Colbert, to cheriſh commerce and manufactures in the country. Both have been utterly ruined by the revolution, while ours have increaſed in a double proportion to that of their loſs. They have ſtruggled with us for the dominion of the ocean; and the ſtrength and glory of our Navy, is increaſed by the annihilation and diſgrace of their fleets. But, above all, they have aſpired to excel the parent of our induſtry, of our wealth, of our civil liberty, and of our general pre-eminence in Europe. Writhing under the painful conſequences of their intemperate zeal for freedom, they behold the ſerene aſpect of this country with frantic jealouſy, and madly attempt to deſtroy by treachery and force, a Conſtitution, whoſe bleſſings they are unable to attain.

Theſe are the true cauſes of their animoſity againſt us, as they appear in the manifeſtos of the Government, and the addreſſes of the people. They do not complain of the Engliſh Miniſtry, but of the Engliſh Government; of Engliſh perfidy; of Engliſh interference on the Continent; of the boundleſs extent of Engliſh commerce, and of the deſpotic dominion of the Engliſh over the ſeas. It is the deſtruction of theſe monuments of our glory, and inſtruments of our proſperity, which conſtitute the avowed

objects

objects of the war.* Worked up, and ſtung into madneſs, they vaunt of overcoming the very elements in their means to ſubdue us.

While the Republic is influenced by projects and paſſions, ſuch as I have deſcribed, it will be vain to hope for peace upon moderate terms, and it would be madneſs to conclude it upon ſuch as muſt confeſs our inferiority and defeat.

When the New Whigs counſel their country to ſubmit to peace upon any terms, their advice is as pernicious to our immediate ſafety, as it is derogatory to our honour.† We are advanced to a pitch

* The public may conſult among other abominable manifeſtos, employed to influence the minds of the French people againſt us, an addreſs to the Miniſters for foreign relations, which is the term in their new jargon for ambaſſadors by Citizen Talleyrand, the ci-devant "Holy Prelate of Autun."

† If the advice is good, and ſuited to the digeſtion of a Britiſh ſtomach, it ſhall not be loſt to the nation through any fault of mine. I will therefore give the opinion of a noble author in his own words, reſpecting the ſituation of his country, and the terms upon which he wiſhes to conclude a peace. "To me it appears "in the ſtrongeſt manner, that the difficulty of making peace "reſts not ſo much with our enemy, as with ourſelves We muſt "ultimately break down the temper of our minds to the real "nature of our ſituation. We muſt turn to look, not at the "proud ſtate of the country, when Mr. Pitt involved us in this "unfortunate conteſt; but at the ſtate to which he has now "reduced us. For his miſconduct, waſte and incapacity, we "muſt now, however unwillingly prepare to pay, not in our "paſt

a pitch of power and proſperity, from which we never can recede with ſafety. We muſt maintain the glorious eminence in which we are placed with that ſword which won it. If we retire puſillanimouſly, we ſhall be attacked as an object of plunder for our riches, and of jealouſy for the remnants of our power. The prime cauſe of the grandeur of Rome, is to be found in her invariable reſolution, never to conclude a diſadvantageous peace. She nobly adhered to this determination under difficulties infinitely greater than any that ſurround this country at preſent. But Mr. Sheridan calls any reference to the practice and opinions of ancient nations, a ſort of ſchool-boy politics. The experience of hiſtory, which is the light of human wiſdom, is thus extinguiſhed by a compendious ſentence. Thoſe accounts of the great and poliſhed people of antiquity, in which Monteſquieu diſcovered the grounds and the proofs of his political reflections; that ſtudy from whence the ſharp-ſighted Machiavel extracted all his remarks,

" paſt and former burthens, however heavy they may be, but in " our national importance, and national conſideration. We may " look at the rank we held in the ſcale of Europe with regret; " but we muſt prepare to ſtand in the ſtation to which he has " reduced us, if not with ſatisfaction, at leaſt with patience." *Earl of Lauderdale's Letter on the preſent meaſures of finance*, p. 11. The paſſage is above all comment. It is well worthy the peruſal of every man who wiſhes well to his country, and yet deſires a change in adminiſtration.

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are deſpiſed and put down from the view of our ſelf-taught politicians. It is impoſſible not to feel our indignation ſwell at ſuch raſh and ignorant preſumption!

Theſe conſiderate and modeſt ſtateſmen, however, will find the hiſtory of modern times, not leſs fruitful in examples of the fatal conſequences of a too ſtrong attachment to peace than that of antiquity. There is not a ſingle inſtance, among the vaſt viciſſitudes of fortune experienced throughout the territories of modern Europe, where a ſtate which has ſunk under a ſenſe of her own inferiority, and ignominiouſly thrown down her arms, has not ultimately ſuffered more than ſhe could have done from the continuance of a fierce and bloody war.

Struck with a ſenſe of ſuch dangers, the legiſlators and ſages of antiquity, laboured with peculiar anxiety to impreſs upon the hearts of the people an ardent love for the Military ſucceſs and glory of their country. They did not wickedly encourage it from a vain principle of ambition, but wiſely from a firm conviction, that it conſtitutes the only means to ſecure independence and reſpect. When the high ſenſe of national honour which cannot brook defeat, is once deſtroyed and rooted out by luxury and avarice, that ſpirit is departed which gave life

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and energy to the people. The reſt is little elſe than a putrid maſs, infecting the ſoil upon which it lies. The Empire of the Eaſt, Venice, Spain and more recently Holland, illuſtrate and confirm this opinion by the hiſtory of their decline.

When a country has heaped its couch ſo high with ſoftneſs, as to ſhudder at the rigid deeds of war, it will ſoon loſe thoſe effeminate comforts which have cauſed its emaſculation. Its wealth becomes a lure, held out for its more warlike neighbours to ſtoop at, and it muſt yield a fat and eaſy prey to thoſe who attack it. Even when ſuffered to remain in peace under the protection of ſome more powerful ally, it gradually ſinks down into lethargic indolence. The tranſition is rapid from an active generous ſtate of emulation, which ſpurs on the human mind to put its energies in competition with, and to excel its neighbours in deeds of proweſs and noble attainment, to one of liſtleſs ſelfiſhneſs, when the people are voluptuous, profligate, inert and factious.

> Nunc patimur longæ pacis mala: ſævior armis
> Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciſcitur orbem.

God forbid, that our country, with the example of Holland before its eyes, ſhould ſink thus patiently under the weight of its own proſperity. The firſt ſymptom of our decline will

will be manifeſted in a readineſs to ſubmit to unequal conditions as the price, and for the ſake of peace. In doing ſo, we teach our enemies that perſeverance is the grand ſecret to humble and ſubdue us.

If we ſhould once fall, we cannot even hope to keep floating on the ſurface, buoyed up by the jealouſy of ſuperior powers, as the Dutch have done till their late ſubjugation by France. The balance of Europe which preſerved declining and decrepid nations from deſtruction, is, at preſent, entirely overthrown. Even ſuppoſing it ſhould be reſtored, yet the fate of Antwerp may teach us what conſequences enſue to a nation which allows a dangerous rival to break the heart-ſtrings of its proſperity. Repoſing upon the ſtability of our government and the ſecurity of our laws, the ſubjects of every prince and ſtate where the Britiſh name is known, have been eager to inveſt their property in our national funds. That wealth which has flowed into Great Britain, from the rank ſhe has held among nations, will paſs from her with the loſs of national eſtimation. Foreigners will no longer truſt us with their property, which, though we have the means, we want the courage to defend.

Indeed, my dear Sir, that country does not exiſt, which has more occaſion than our own to reflect

reflect deeply upon the maxim of the moſt profound politician among the ancient hiſtorians.* He has obſerved, that a juſt and honourable peace is the moſt fair and uſeful bleſſing which a Nation can poſſeſs; but when it is founded upon terms of ſervile inequality and ſubmiſſion, it is of all things the moſt diſgraceful and pernicious.

Upon what ground do the New Whigs found their exhortations to ſacrifice our reputation and endanger our ſafety by making an unequal peace? Is it from the dread of an invaſion? The very women of Athens, in the zeal of patriotiſm, deſtroyed the family of him, who offered ſimilar advice from a ſimilar motive. Armed and prepared as this country is, what has ſhe to fear from ſuch an event? If, regardleſs of domeſtic diviſions, the people unite as they have always done to repel the attacks of a foreign enemy, the de-

* The reflection is in Polybius, Lib. 4, Hist. Sec. 31. Ειρηνη γαρ μετα μεν τȣ δικαιȣ και πρέποντος, καλλιςον εςι κτημα και λυσιτελέςατον μετὰ δὲ κακιας ἐπονειδιςȣ παντων ἀισχιςον και βλαβερωτατον. This judicious hiſtorian is remarking upon the ill conduct of the Maſſenians in obſerving a ſtrict neutrality between the Arcadians and Lacedæmonians. Having remained at peace while the Arcadians, who were their friends and allies, were contending with the Lacedæmonians, who were their implacable enemies, they were immediately attacked after the defeat of the former, and reduced to ſubjection.

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feat of theſe invaders is certain and will form the ſureſt means to facilitate peace.

Do the New Whigs urge it from the hope that we may repair the loſſes of war, by our induſtrious accumulations in peace? Looking at what has taken place, they will find that our commerce has always riſen moſt rapidly after the concluſion of a ſucceſsful war. The admiration of our courage, and the opinion of our ſtrength opened the markets of Europe to our merchants, after the peace of Utrecht and that of 1763. If France ſhould now riſe upon our ruins, ſhe may ſhut the ports of the world againſt us, and accompliſh, by negociation, what ſhe vainly attempts by force. Allowing the poſſibility of our emerging again, by ſuch means, from that inferior ſtation which Lord Lauderdale and his friends adviſe us quietly and patiently to take in the ſcale of nations, is it credible that France, jealous of our commerce, and eager for war and plunder, would ſuffer us to creep back again into power? The very purchaſe of peace would invite the renewal of hoſtilities, while we have any colonies, commerce, or wealth remaining. Neither inoffenſive conduct, nor patience, nor ſubmiſſion on our parts, could preſerve us from inſult and oppreſſion. The grounds of attack upon the Venetian States, not to mention Switzerland, and the late cruel and cowardly conduct towards

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the Pope, may ſhew thoſe who need the leſſon, that France can never want a pretext for commencing hoſtilities.

It is urged, however, that the heavy burdens which are impoſed upon the country are deciſive and inſuperable objections to a continuance of the war. Undoubtedly they are heavy. But ought they to appear ſo very grievous, when it is conſidered, that they are impoſed to repel injury, diſgrace and ruin from the Empire. In no period of our proſperity has our opulence been ſo immenſe as it is at this very time. Notwithſtanding the taxes which have been impoſed, I ſtate it broadly, and challenge contradiction, there does not exiſt one ſtate or diſtrict in Europe, where the inhabitants enjoy, ſo univerſally, all the comforts and conveniencies, which riches and freedom can beſtow, as they now do in Great Britain, during the calamities of war. It is to enſure a continuance of thoſe bleſſings to the rich and to the poor, that the higher ranks are called upon to contribute a portion of their means.

The ſpirit and liberality of the nation cannot be rouſed to a more glorious purpoſe than to protect the main ſources of our proſperity. Let them remember that it is for the ſafety of all our invaluable colonies in the Eaſt, and in the Weſt; for the employment of our manufacturers

facturers at home; for the continuance of our commercial relations abroad; and above all, for the ſecurity of our domeſtic freedom, and the untarniſhed honor of the empire. When we call to mind what other nations, what we ourſelves, what France, has endured, for much inferior objects, ought we to refuſe to bear, or repine at burthens which leave us a greater portion of all the comforts and elegant coveniencies of life, than our anceſtors had ever enjoyed.

There is no alternative for this country, but immediate deſtruction, or a manly reſiſtance. The French Republic openly avow their intention to exact retribution for our former glory, for our preſent proſperity, and for the humiliation of France, ever ſince the peace of Ryſwick.* They have entered other countries with declarations of friendſhip, and the piercing cries of the plundered inhabitants have re-echoed throughout Europe. Do her menaces ſound in our infatuated ears as pledges of peculiar tenderneſs and moderation to us? What treatment are we to expect from that enemy, when victorious, who prefers the chances of war to all reaſonable propoſals of peace? What mercy could this nation hope for, if conquered,

* Addreſs of Citizen Talleyrand, already noticed.

when common prudence cannot keep back the eager animoſity of that Republic, from the vain ſatisfaction of idle and empty threats againſt her.

We have made it fully evident, that we are deſirous of peace on terms ſcarcely compatible with our future ſecurity. But when the Directory go further, and require from us what amounts to unconditional ſubmiſſion, can an Engliſhman heſitate upon the path he is to take? The merchant, counting upon the ſober round of immediate loſs and profit, muſt perceive the certainty of ruin on the one hand, and the chance, at leaſt, of a ſucceſsful ſtruggle on the other. But he who contraſts the ſituation of his country with the fate of other kingdoms; he who has anxiouſly ſcrutinized the ſources of their elevation, and the cauſes of their decline; muſt feel the certain conviction, that once to admit the principle is to deſtroy the energy of the nation, the ſtability of the empire, and the happineſs of poſterity.

If the people at home have caught one ſpark of emulous valour from the glories of their navy, they cannot ſubmit thus tamely to diſgrace and deſtruction. They will never lie cowering, like a timorous plump of ſea-fowl, fearfully and paſſively expecting upon whom the pounces of this hawk is to faſten. They will not obſcure and deface the well-earned glory of thoſe illuſtrious

trious heroes who have ſwept the combined fleets of France, of Spain, of Holland from the ſeas. If, through our cowardice, thoſe brave ſailors, who died to confirm our triumphs, have expired in vain, their blood is laid upon our heads.

Looking at the paſt ſtruggles of this country, and the recent events of the war, are we not compell'd to aſk what it is that has happened, which can juſtify a great and valiant people, in yielding to deſpair? In every conteſt, in which our ſingle ſtrength has been oppoſed to that of the Republic, we have proved victorious. Our navy keeps every one of our enemies bound in chains upon their own coaſts. Our army is inſpired with a noble emulation to rival the example they have received from our marine.

Are we to ſuffer the wicked and intereſted ſtatements of the New Whigs, to depreſs our ſpirits in contradiction to our feelings and our reaſon? Let us look to their new and deſperate coalition with the Correſponding Society for evidence of their motives and their views. It is not that ſociety which has changed its principles. It is the Oppoſition who are determined to deſtroy the country, or force their paſſage to the Cabinet. Their convivial meetings

are formed into Schools of Republicaniſm and Sedition. Their toaſts, their ſongs, their ſentiments, breath the ſame contempt for the out-lines of the Conſtitution, the ſame diſreſpect for the perſon of their Sovereign, the ſame adoration of pure Democracy, and the ſame fealty to the French Republic, that diſtinguiſhed the Revolution and Correſponding Societies.

Moſt aſſuredly, our ſituation is not deſtitute of danger, when the efforts of the country are oppoſed and thwarted by ſuch men. Neither is it to be concealed that we can not hope for ſucceſs againſt our natural enemy without conſiderable ſelf-denial on the part of the rich. But what country has purchaſed glory and advantage at an inferior price. When we fight for our domeſtic liberties, for our foreign independence, and for our commercial rights; when we riſe up to protect Europe from anarchy, barbariſm and final ſubjugation, the object is worthy of the effort, and the reſult is in the hands of God. If we fall in ſuch a conteſt, we fall as becomes a noble people, leaving an example to our poſterity, which may excite them to avenge us.

I know, my dear friend, you agree with me, in thinking that there is but little probability of ſuch a melancholy event. Alone and unaſſiſted, our native ſtrength is more than ſufficient to enſure

ſure us final ſucceſs. But courage and magnanimity have never failed to procure allies. A very ſhort reſiſtance muſt rally Europe round our ſtandard. Thoſe powers, which are ſtill independent, cannot long endure the contemptuous violation of their rights, the reſtleſs ſpirit, the overbearing haughtineſs, and the ambitious plans of the French Republic. Her enormous exactions from her allies, and her newly acquired dominions have ſown the ſeeds of reſiſtance, diſcontent and inſurrection. It does not require much ſagacity to foreſee that a ſtorm is now gathering, which muſt ultimately burſt upon her.

I am, &c.

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